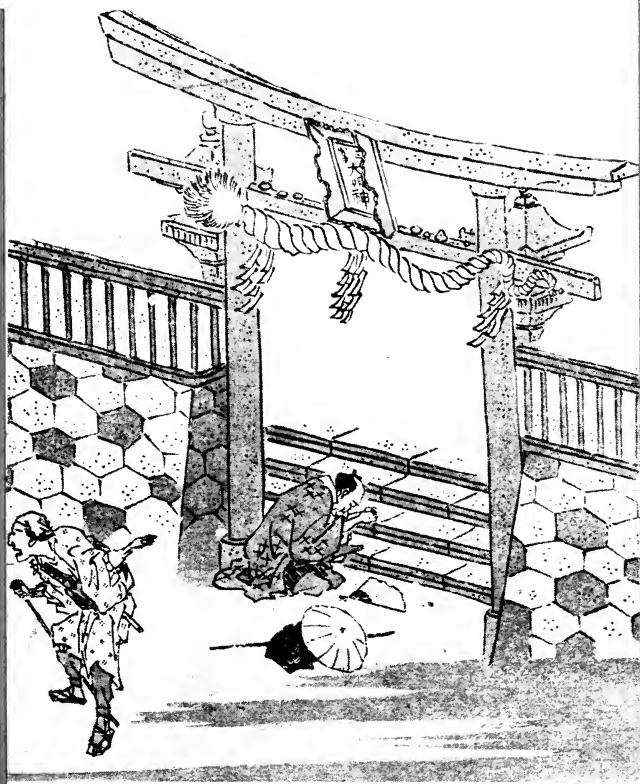


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PLAYING THE GAME

A STORY OF JAPAN

DOUGLAS SLADEN



W.H. Watkin Jones



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PLAYING.. THE GAME

A STORY OF JAPAN

BEING A SEQUEL TO "A JAPANESE MARRIAGE"

BY

DOUGLAS SLADEN

AUTHOR OF

"A JAPANESE MARRIAGE," "THE JAPS AT HOME,"
AND "QUEER THINGS ABOUT JAPAN"



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PREFACE

THE period occupied by the story is from 1894 to 1904, and, among its adventures and its love-episodes, shows how the ex-Grenadier, Sir Randolph Rich, the type of the athletic young Englishman, gradually changed his opinion about the Japanese. When he went to Japan in 1894 he regarded them as a nation of conceited monkeys, and treated them with the utmost arrogance and contempt; in 1904 he thought them the finest foreigners in the world. Though the story is of Legation life in Tokyo, there are no portraits of people actually connected with the British Legation there. Only one personage in the book is drawn from life (*with his own consent*), that of the far-seeing and patriotic man to whom we owe all our good relations with Japan; and he never had the smallest connection with our Legation in Tokyo.

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DEDICATION

*“ To Lady Lindsay
The Best of our Living Poetesses
This Book is Dedicated.”*



PLAYING THE GAME

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

IN Tokyo town there are a million and a half of Asiatics and such a handful of English, that like pioneers in the forest primeval, or mariners shipwrecked on an island, they must perforce be conscious of each other's existence. It has been the wont of persons so placed to override distinctions of station, which, in the land of their birth, would have divided them like the great gulf of the Apocalypse. If you are confined for your society to a very small number of persons, you exhaust their powers of nourishing your brain as a succession of the same crops exhausts the soil. A fresh person of no great gifts or charm may be a positive relief to a brain jaded with sameness. Thus it was that we English in Tokyo in the early nineties were something of a happy family, or perhaps a little republic like the Republics of Arts and Letters in European lands. I do not mean by this that there was any feeling of Jack-is-as-good-as-his-master among us, or that anybody except Lord Clapham ever forgot that he was a peer by birth and the British Minister—our official head. Still less did any woman ever think of intruding on the prerogatives of Mrs. Tiffany, who as wife of the First Secretary of the Legation was British official hostess, his lordship being a widower. But all the English of gentle birth were received as personal friends by Lord Clapham and the Tiffanys; and in his

posing sort of way by the Second Secretary, Basil Finch, and of course by the valuable Secretary-Interpreter, Orlando Jevons, who would have preferred a wax figure from Madame Tussaud's to no society at all.

Being with Mrs. Tiffany was rather too like being food for powder. She enjoyed exercising her sarcasms, though she was a good-hearted woman, and we used sometimes to wonder how Great Britain would get along without her wordy castigations of our worthy diplomatic representative.

The one member of our Legation who made no pretence of equality or fraternity was Randolph Rich, the Third Secretary, a big, fair-haired, ruddy Englishman, who had been in the Grenadiers and had exchanged into the Diplomatic Service to get away from regimental expenses. He was the nephew of a baronet, and heir to the title, but the estates were not entailed, and his uncle had a daughter who was, according to Rich's account, the bane of his existence, though he had not seen her since she was a child.

I knew Rich, because he was at Cheltenham with me. He was sent there in the days when Cheltenham was regarded as the royal road to getting into the army. Its cheapness, too, may have been a consideration. Otherwise I do not suppose he would have honoured me with his confidences; he would have been more likely to include me with the rest of the non-diplomatic in Tokyo, of whom it was his charitable and gentlemanly habit to remark, in his first days in Japan, that he wondered why they let such a lot of bounders have the run of the Legation. Yet I rather liked him at school, where you get to know a man best, because, although he was haughty and off-handed, he was a thorough sportsman. And I do not only mean by this that he was captain of the eleven and splendid at every other sport—which he was—but that he could be relied upon to "play the game," as we say, in a thoroughly English, manly sort of way. You could not help looking up to Rich at school, and you could rely upon his doing the spirited thing to the end of his life. He had become rather snobbish in the Grenadiers, that

was his weak side, and he began by behaving hatefully at Tokyo.

It was indeed difficult to say whether his or Lord Clapham's was the worst appointment in a Legation whose personnel seemed to have been selected for their unfitness. But I, looking at it from the outside point of view, used to thank my stars that we had Rich to show them what a big, brave, manly Englishman was like in that five - o'clock tea - party to whom British interests in Tokyo were entrusted in the trustful nineties.

That was as things seemed then. As they turned out Lord Clapham did the right thing. It may have been long-headed statesmanship on his part, but nobody would have accused him of it in those days. His basis of action seemed rather to be that of so many philosophical Radicals who feel a call to be the friends of every country but their own. It seemed the guiding star of his policy to assume that England must be in the wrong. Oh, for an hour of Sir Harry Parkes was the cry of every Englishman who made his livelihood in Japan, during the first days of the Clapham régime.

In person Lord Clapham was immensely tall. He had a really handsome face of majestic calm, recalling an Egyptian monument, and clean-shaven except for a narrow band of red whiskers which met under his chin. He walked with a stoop, and kept his head thrown back, and his mouth a little open like Luca della Robbia's singing children. But in his deep serious eyes and broad forehead the wisdom of one of the founders of philosophic sects seemed to repose.

In London he would have filled the post of president of various learned societies with marvellous sympathy and industry, and not a little *éclat*. He was cut out for the head of the London School Board, which has since done him the honour of dying. But to nearly every Englishman in Japan he seemed a crank absolutely unfitted for his present post; except that, belonging to the school which turns the other cheek to the smiter, he pleased the Japanese, who loved to trample on foreign representatives. It was also imagined that, education being Lord Clapham's hobby,

he might teach the Japanese something. The burning question of that day was Treaty Revision, in which Great Britain, having far the largest interests, was expected to show an example of firmness to the other nations.

There was no saying to what depths of humility his Excellency might not have descended but for his beautiful Spanish niece, Chiquita Palafox, who was as engaging as a kitten, but had the temper of a tigress. Chiquita was mistress at the British Legation, though Mrs. Tiffany acted as its official female head. She was only eighteen, but much fitter than her uncle to be Her Britannic Majesty's representative. When she blushed, her clear, dark cheeks mantled with crimson in the most becoming manner; when she was angry they flamed.

Chiquita never learnt the fine distinctions of importance which reign among Britons, and was just as affable to me as to any titled globe-trotter.

I made the acquaintance of Lord Clapham and Chiquita not, as might have been expected, through my school-friend Rich, but through Orlando Jevons, the Secretary-Interpreter of the Legation, and really by far the most important person in it, being the only member of it who could speak a single word of Japanese, and a person of boundless energy, while the rest were dawdlers, a prey to philosophic calm like Lord Clapham, or men who regarded diplomacy as designed to give them sinecures, and not as a means for promoting the interests of Great Britain. They never thought about Great Britain except when their dignity was ruffled and they were complaining of the "bally cheek of the Japs." They would have thought pushing just as bad form diplomatically as socially.

As Jevons told the Japanese what Lord Clapham said, and told him what they said, the whole control of the situation was in his hands; and he is now one of the most famous men in his country's diplomatic service because he used that power for the sole object of bringing the English and the Japanese nearer to each other. And this he did, not at a period when the whole world was ringing with Japanese victories over first

a great Asiatic and then a great European Power, but at a period when the Japanese were regarded as a nation of amusing but arrogant children who needed keeping in their places with a stern hand. Even the English merchants in Yokohama were of the opinion that, beyond a monkey-like genius for mimicking Western customs and institutions, the Japanese were a people of no account, and much inferior to the Chinese.

Lord Clapham may privately have shared the opinion of the man who was Consul in China for twenty-five years, and could not conceive any circumstances under which the British Government would support him, but he had the habit of speaking of his countrymen as an over-bearing nation, and tolerably certain to be wrong in any dispute.

In person Jevons was a dapper, carefully-dressed man, with a handsome pointed Spanish beard and twirling moustaches. His familiarity arose from a geniality which embraced the whole human race, especially the Japanese.

It was he who first introduced me to Chiquita Palafox, Lord Clapham's Spanish niece. They were great friends because she was jealous of the English. She hated their pride and their power, and though neither Tiffany nor Finch nor Rich did much for British influence, they were at one in having a fine British contempt for the less fortunate nations who constituted the rest of the world. Rich and she were always fighting. He thought her a silly conceited little Spanish monkey, and treated her as a child—though Spaniards are very grown-up at eighteen.

Jevons, who owed his eccentric name of Orlando to an Italian mother brought up with a passion for Ariosto, had the advantage of speaking Spanish among his half-dozen languages, so that Chiquita knew what a very accomplished man he was. One thing which enhanced his popularity with her, but, more than anything else, shook my confidence in him, was Mrs. Tiffany's opinion of him.

"Tom, my dear," she used to say to her lord and master, "the thing's a bounder—an adventurer—for all we know a creature paid by Russia to sell British

interests. It's monstrous that the Government should leave him here to bamboozle the chief. A blind man could see what is going on! But dear me, he's worth the whole lot of you as a man, for he does do something besides eat and drink and smoke and sleep, even if that something is to sell his country; and if he didn't dine with us every Saturday night, I should die of *ennui*!"

Then she would kiss her absurd husband, of whom she was really very fond, and cry, "I don't mean a word of what I have said. I am glad that I have married a straightforward English gentleman! The man must be a rogue, or he wouldn't be able to speak so many languages. I am sure he began by selling carpets at Cairo to the people at Shepherd's Hotel!"

My position in Japan was a peculiar one. I was master at a Dai Gakku, a sort of advanced school, where my predecessor had met with some not very pleasant experiences. He was what we call a smug at Oxford, and anxious as the Japanese boy is to learn, he is exceedingly fond of taking liberties where he can do so with impunity. From the beginning poor Hewlett was the victim of monkey tricks, but it did not stop there. They used to find fault with his way of teaching instead of his finding fault with their ways of learning, and finally they demanded his dismissal and obtained it. Someone told the Japanese that in English public schools they chose masters because they had been in the 'Varsity Eleven or Eight, with of course a modicum of scholarship; so as I was a Blue with a First I had no trouble in getting the post on condition that I learnt Japanese.

By treating the boys as men I managed to avoid outbreaks, but it was as difficult as being British Resident at a savage court. Under their smiling exteriors were concealed hyper-sensitiveness, arrogance, vindictiveness, unfathomable cunning. I considered myself pretty successful to have our relations on the whole pleasant. In studiousness and intelligence they were models, and when they had agreed amongst themselves to respect me, they were most polite.

Their own teachers command the highest respect;

they even use the word "teacher" in addressing an old person—the old being held in extraordinary veneration in Japan.

The difficulties of my predecessor's position had doubtless been increased by the state of tension in Japan; the agitation for Treaty Revision had reached an acute stage. After Commodore Perry had forced the opening up of Japan to foreigners, the Powers, as had always been their custom in dealing with Asiatic nations, had imposed various restrictions on the Japanese relations with foreigners. They had fixed what duties Japan was to be allowed to levy on foreign imports, and above all things they had made it impossible to proceed against the foreigner except in his own Consular Courts. In return for this they had allowed the Japanese to limit foreigners to about half a dozen Treaty Ports, outside of which they could only go with the written permission of the Japanese authorities. To travellers this permission was always readily granted; to merchants never; to other residents only when they were really engaged as teachers, or, like the Anglican bishop, had such high claims that they were by a legal fiction registered as teachers.

As the Japanese increased in warlike strength in the Navy and Army, which they never ceased to develop on the best European models, they naturally grew restive about being treated like savages, and never ceased to agitate for Treaty Revision. To their agitation the Powers had all along turned a deaf ear, but now, Great Britain, the power whose interests outweighed all others, and the only Power which kept a fleet in Eastern waters capable of coping with the formidable Japanese ships, even in the hands of Asiatics, was beginning to weaken. The English merchants in Yokohama were furious. Even Philip Sandys, who liked the Japanese, and knowing enough of their language to read their newspapers, understood them a great deal better than nine-tenths of his fellows, thought it most unnecessary, and was doubtful whether it would be possible for English merchants to stay in Japan if the Japanese had their way about Treaty Revision.

The Japanese were at this moment awaiting the final reply of England, so feeling ran higher than ever. And there were other complications besides the unwillingness of the English in Japan to submit to a Japanese jurisdiction.

The Young Japanese party considered that Japan would be ruined if foreign merchants, with their wealth, were allowed to go all over Japan; and, not having the slightest notion of the strength of the Western Powers, proposed to abrogate all the existing privileges of foreigners without giving them anything instead. They anticipated the arrival of Great Britain's consent to the Treaty Revision much earlier than the Government did; and the material for riots was always at hand in the numerous *Soshi*, or educated hooligans, of the capital.

But the tenseness of the political situation did not make the British Legation take itself any more seriously than usual. Lord Clapham was little away from the Legation; work was his only occupation, and Jevons was a busybody who enjoyed the importance of transacting Legation work. But Tiffany and Finch and Randolph Rich went to the Legation during official hours as a matter of form and not because they conceived the possibility of there being affairs which required their attention.

Their luncheon parties and teas and excursions and week-ends in the country were their real business.

Finch was just this much better than the other two—that instead of thinking Japan a God-forsaken country, which he wished to leave by the next boat, he was impressionizing in an indolent æsthetic way. He was quite as idle about Legation work as the others, but he had Japanese collections—including a Japanese wife.

One morning I received a note from Chiquita Palafox, Lord Clapham's niece, asking me if I minded staying at the Legation from the following Saturday to Monday, as Jevons was going away for the week-end with Finch. Jevons, being the Japanese-speaking Secretary, lived in the Legation, so as to interpret in any sudden emergency. I was glad to accept the

invitation, for Miss Palafox was a charming hostess, and on the termination of a similar invitation a few months before, I had discovered from Jevons that there were certain fees that I had a right to draw as acting interpreter.

CHAPTER II

WHEN I arrived at the Legation I found it in its usual state of somnolence. The Minister was sitting at the table in the library where he transacted his official business and wrote at the "History of Philosophy," which was the serious business of his grave life. Miss Palafox was lolling in a deck chair near the window, engaged in her usual occupation of killing time. The servant showed me straight in. Lord Clapham made hardly any distinction between his official and social life. He gave me a kindly little nod, and asked me to excuse his getting up, as he was sorting some notes for his history. And his niece never got up for anyone when she was once comfortably settled. She held out her hand, and asked me to arrange her cushions more comfortably behind her head.

I thought she meant it for a little touch of friendliness to make me realize that I was a guest as well as an acting interpreter; but as I stooped to do it, she said in a low voice: "Something very serious is going to happen. Be on the *qui vive*, and be on your guard in everything you do and say. I will give you tea presently in the big drawing-room upstairs—it is about the only place where you can be sure of not being overheard."

This seemed rather a feeble conclusion to such an important piece of news, but when tea was ready in the little sort of recess formed by the tower, I saw how it bore out the situation.

"I always have tea here," she said; "it is the only place where one is quite sure of not being seen or overheard. Walls have more ears in Japan than elsewhere, but even walls can't hear across a room forty feet square!"

"There has been a Japanese deputation here," she

went on, "and I am sure they mean no good. To begin with, they came after Mr. Jevons had gone away and before you arrived; they did it on purpose, because they brought one or two people who spoke English and did not ask for the interpreter as they generally do. I was in the room. I was sitting just where you found me, and Uncle was sitting at his table; the deputation stood between me and him. They paid no attention to me—they never dreamt that I could understand any Japanese, and I can't speak it. But we Spaniards do a good deal of our talking with gestures, and the language of gestures is pretty much the same everywhere."

"Quite so," I said; "it's the natural form of expression for the whole human race. So you understood a good deal of what passed?"

"Much more than my uncle did."

"Well, what did you gather?"

"In the first place that they were very much in earnest, for they asked again and again, and my uncle kept shaking his head—and in the second place that there was a good deal of discussion between themselves before they answered his questions."

"Did your uncle tell you what they came about?"

"Of course he did."

"May you tell me?"

"That's what I want to see you about!"

"What was it?"

"We have just received the British Government's reply about Treaty Revision. The deputation were the spokesmen of the Young Japanese party, and they came to get a sight of the Treaty. They did not ask for it right out, of course—only the English do that—but they came to get it by hook or by crook, and were astonished that my uncle would not give way. The Japanese look upon him as mere clay for the potter. They left him, saying, 'You will find it better to have done what we asked you.' That was in English."

"Is that all you found out?"

"No, that's all my uncle told me. I made out on my own account that they meant to get it before their Foreign Minister returned to Tokyo. He is away just

now, or my uncle would, of course, have delivered it to him, and I distinctly saw one of them draw the attention of the rest to the Legation Safe, which stands in the library."

"Then you think that they mean to try and possess themselves of it before their Foreign Minister returns?"

"I would bet this hat," she said with a little smile which invited my attention to the convincingness of the bet; "and it's hard to keep oneself in hats out here!"

"You should do in Japan as the Japanese do!"

"No, thank you! If we hadn't our hats to think about, how should we get away from our thoughts? The Japanese woman hasn't enough original sin in her to need the relief of tearing an expensive hat to pieces—to re-trim it."

"Well, when do you think they will make the attempt?" I asked, knowing her capacity for frivolling at the most serious moments.

"To-night, of course," she replied as coolly as if I had asked her when she thought it would rain.

"Why?"

"They know that everybody is away. Mr. Jevons has gone with Mr. Finch to Nikko, and Mr. Rich has gone with the Tiffanys to Miyanoshita—not that they would really be any good if they were here."

"Why?"

"They don't live in the Legation, except Mr. Jevons, and you are a bigger man than he is. And my uncle wouldn't have them in to garrison the Legation even if they were in Tokyo." She went off into fits of laughter.

"What are you laughing at?"

"Fancy Mr. Tiffany and Mr. Rich and Mr. Finch having to turn out of their beds to make a house-party here where they attend to their office duties every day of their working lives!"

The intonation with which she uttered this last sentence expressed an amount of innuendo that only a Southern woman could have imported into it.

We had an anxious time that late spring afternoon. Chiquita was twice the man that her uncle was, yet

she thought it madness not to take precautions. But Lord Clapham, though he was weak as a rabbit, and had not the mildest idea of defending himself, had never seen fear.

"They would not dare to invade the British Legation. It would be an international affair."

"They would like that. They wish to embarrass the Government."

"It's British territory."

"You'd better tell the police," said the practical Chiquita. She could not understand anyone having the smallest fear of British territory represented by her uncle. In her eyes the power of England was nothing compared to the power of the small policeman stationed outside the Legation compound.

"The police have no jurisdiction in the Legation."

"Well, arm the servants, and put them in the room."

"No one can get into the compound."

"We cannot trust to that."

It was impossible to frighten Lord Clapham with bogeys.

"How I wish Mr. Rich was here," cried Chiquita.

After her previous remarks this seemed a little inconsequent.

"He can make Uncle do things," she explained.

"I am sure no one could manage Lord Clapham better than you do."

"Not in a thing like this. I might do something if I knew what to do, but Mr. Rich would just do it, though he knew it was flat against my uncle's wishes, and when it came to Uncle's ears would say, 'I thought you would like me to do it, sir.'"

When I went up to dress I had hardly closed my door before I heard a timid little knock. It was Chiquita.

"Things *aren't* quite right," she said. "When I went to Mr. Jevons's room to get his revolver for you, I found that all the cartridges were gone." She handed me the revolver.

"Is this it?" I asked, unable to repress a smile which said, "How like a woman to bring a pistol without any cartridges."

"You can bluff with it," she retorted, eyeing me narrowly to see how I took it.

"I'm game," I said.

"Besides, I have cartridges." She handed me the absurd little satin bag in which she carried her absurd little pocket-handkerchief. The weight showed that there were a good many.

"Are you sure they fit?"

"Perfectly. We've fired away half this box. Mr. Jevons has been teaching me to shoot, and I wouldn't use his cartridges."

I loaded the revolver, and put it in my pocket.

"We shall very likely want it," I remarked, putting the balance of the cartridges into another pocket. "There must be an accomplice in the house. I shall go and tell that little policeman."

"What's the use?" she said. "Uncle doesn't mean to have a guard, and the police outside can't see what's going on in the compound. Besides, those people won't break into the compound; they'll get in on some excuse. I don't think they'll even have to break into the house."

Lord Clapham refused to arm the servants. "It was quite impossible that the British Legation should be robbed. To arm and warn the servants was to invite burglary." He would do nothing. He dismissed me immediately after dinner, for fear that I should re-open the subject.

I joined Miss Palafox and began to discuss what we should do. We agreed both to sleep with our windows open, so as to hear if anyone was moving about in the compound; and to go to bed without striking a light, so as not to let spies know what time we really retired. If either of us heard burglars, we were to throw the wash-hand basin out of the window. Falling on the flagged courtyard of the compound, in the night, this would make a noise that could be heard half a mile. It would probably scare the thieves away, and at all events rouse the whole Legation.

I did not mean to carry out my part of the bargain. Knowing Chiquita's courage, I felt certain that her first impulse would be to expose herself in trying to

drive the robbers away. I should hear the basin fall, wherever I was, and I had made my plans. I went and told the little policeman everything; and, though the Minister had forbidden any police to be admitted to the Legation, I handed him my latch-key, and told him that if he heard the basin fall or my revolver fired he was to rush in with any assistance he could get. I begged from him the loan of a dark lantern.

I settled the whole thing in a few minutes, and then dropped the subject, for though I imagined Miss Palafox to be a woman of great nerve I thought it undesirable to try her nerves by harping on the subject, and I felt very tender to the heroic little beauty who, conscious of a great danger, was calmly preparing to meet it with her hands tied by her uncle's folly.

My tender speeches I need not set down here, nor her unwontedly gracious responses. It was the first time I had ever known Miss Palafox feminine in ought but the adornment of her graceful person. I should have preferred that she had not suddenly repeated: "How I wish that Mr. Rich was here!"

There was nothing I wanted less, for if he was here with his superb physique and boisterous spirits, he would be safe to monopolise the conversation, even if Miss Palafox had the bad taste to prefer me.

"Why do you want him? He couldn't do anything if he was here now, except be another man for our little garrison."

"Well, that's something!"

We were silent for a minute or two, then she said: "He's rather the kind of man a woman wants to lean on when she's in a tight place."

The words "a tight place" made me feel angry. Why was that idiotic Lord Clapham going to expose a delicately-nurtured woman like his niece to a night of terrors or violence, perhaps murder, and imperil his country's interests by his neglect of the most ordinary precautions? He had had his warning, and it would have been perfectly simple for him to have applied to the Japanese authorities for a guard, or delivered the document for safe-keeping to the officials of the Japanese Foreign Office. It could be kept sealed, and

handed back to him for formal presentation to the Foreign Minister on his return to Tokyo.

His contempt of danger was not courage; it was the fatuousness which made the sexagenarian colonels of the native regiments in the Indian Mutiny allow their men to retain their arms and embark on a debauch of treason and murder, which commonsense would have nipped in the bud.

"Yet I hate him," she said, her mind continuing to run on Rich.

"Why?" I asked, not really wishing to know, but thankful for any subject of conversation which kept us from the anxieties which were uppermost in our thoughts.

"Because he treats me as a little girl!"

"How?"

"Laughs at me when I scold him."

I might have suggested that she was rather young to take him to task, but I had no desire to defend such a dangerous rival, so I looked as if I thought it was shocking of him to be ungrateful for her admonitions.

"And he's a beast."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that he kisses me."

"Why do you let him?"

"I don't; I hate it!"

"But the man can't be such a brute as to go on doing it if you hate it!"

"He doesn't go on doing it."

"I am afraid I don't understand you—I thought you said he did."

"It's only when I scold him—he does it to stop me."

"Why do you scold him then?"

"Because he needs it—and it would be cowardly not to."

"I'm afraid I don't see any way out of it, Miss Palafox."

"Nor do I," she answered, pensively. "I wish he was here now."

When we knew that a great crisis, perhaps a tragedy, was hanging over our heads, only waiting for the darkness, it seemed absurd to ramble on about such

subjects; but how few persons when they are waiting for anything, even when they are about to part from their loved ones for a long period, spend the last hours rationally? They pass the time as a rule in an aimless way that would drive them silly with *ennui* on any ordinary day of their lives.

It seemed as if the twilight never would end that night, but at length the darkness closed round us like forgetfulness, and according to our previous arrangements we drifted apart, inconsequently, recognising that to bid good-night was to give our enemies a signal.

I secreted myself in the library, in an angle where nobody could approach me from behind. I fixed the door open so that the light which burned all night in the hall should fall on the safe. But I took my dark lantern, because the robbers would extinguish the light. For the next hour I noticed the tick of every second. I was straining my ears. Then I heard a noise I could not account for. I gripped my revolver and got ready to flash my lantern. The noise drew nearer. It was upstairs, and came from unshod feet. The Japanese do not wear shoes in the house. As the feet came downstairs I was more and more certain that they were shoeless. They crept along the passage; my heart ticked louder than the clock. But the light did not go out. The whole house must be in league against us, or the robber—for I only heard two feet—would not be so bold. I held my revolver at my thigh—I fire on the rise. I thought I had pulled the trigger—and lo!—it was Chiquita! I don't know how I stopped my finger.

She had the keys. She opened the safe, took the fateful dispatch, and locked it again. I wondered if her uncle had repented. If not, how did she get the keys? He must have given them to her, and she must have come down in her stockings only because it was necessary that the abstraction of the dispatch should be kept a secret.

She went upstairs again, and I could hear her moving about for some time; but that was nothing. It takes an eternal time to do things in the dark with

as little noise as possible which you are accustomed to do in the light.

I heard the seconds tick, the hours strike to twelve o'clock, half-past twelve; one o'clock, half-past one; two o'clock, half-past two; three o'clock—I could not swear about half-past three. No further attempt had been made to enter the room. Gradually I dropped asleep.

CHAPTER III

ANY ordinary sane person is compelled to think of risks on most days of his life, yet he probably runs worse risks than any he takes precautions to avoid. This makes a few people utterly reckless, but the others are content not to encounter perils voluntarily except as heroic measures to meet a crisis.

Chiquita's stout little heart thumped against her ribs as she slunk upstairs, eager to go more swiftly than silence permitted, fearful that she was not silent enough. A person who is accustomed to walk with high-heeled shoes makes almost more noise walking without shoes—the balance of the body is falsely distributed and the boards creak under it. Thump, thump, thump went her heart. Every moment she expected to feel a Japanese burglar's hand on her throat. A minute before she had been facing the more deadly danger of a revolver which could hardly be prevented from going off, so difficult is it to check oneself when one is ready to fire, and an object presents itself.

It seemed an age before she reached the door of her bedroom, a fortress in which she could entrench herself. The worst was over now. If the burglars had entered her room they would have found the forged dispatch which she had laid on the edge of the bed—they would not know it from the real, and having possessed themselves of it would go their way. She laughed to herself at the brilliance of the stratagem which she had unconsciously achieved in leaving the room after she had laid the forged dispatch on the bed. That she had gone down to the safe for the real dispatch was a mere side-incident—the main thing was that she had left her room vacant for them to examine.

This whole crisis had probably blown over, and a crisis of a more purely political nature might be already

opening, as some Japanese student, who understood English well, was perusing the craftily-worded dispatch which she had forged. But she did not relax her precautions—she had the Spanish love for plot and intrigue, and this was the grandest plot in which she had ever had a finger.

Before leaving her room she had taken off her evening dress and silk petticoat—their rustling would have betrayed her—and substituted a soft padded *kimono*. Just as she got back to her door she slipped this off, and wrapping it round the dispatch, threw it as she entered the room on the back of her bed against the wall, so that if by any chance there were men waiting in her room and they had not found the forged dispatch, when they heard something drop on the bed they might lay their hands on the forgery which was left just where they were likely to look first.

How wise she felt in the midst of all her terrors—when a sackful of something like bran was flung over her head and her wrists were seized by strong hands and drawn behind her and pinioned. Once, twice, thrice, a strong fine cord was whipped round them and pulled tight, and when it was knotted her bonds were made yet tighter by the ends of the cord being lapped round them between her hands, so as to strain them into her wrists.

Then she was thrown on the bed on her face, with her head still enveloped in the chaff sack, while her legs were being tied together at the ankles with the same cruel tightness. More terrifying even than this was the feeling of men's arms groping through the chaff for her head. Were they going to strangle her?

Not by throttling—but something awful was being forced into her mouth. What was coming next? It must be death in some appalling form devised by malignant Japanese cunning.

They were torturing her, of course, to punish her for defeating their plans. Without her her uncle would have been a lamb in their hands.

Something was being fastened at the back of her neck—a garotte, of course, which they would twist slowly till she was strangled. Chiquita had fine

courage, and even at this awful moment she told herself that garotting could not last long, that it would be more merciful than gradual stifling by having her nose and throat suffocated with chaff.

A little tug at the strap round her neck told her that the strangling was beginning. Then they stopped. She had heard of the refinement of the cruelty of Orientals; how they loved to begin their tortures with the refined torture of anticipation, to play with their victims as a cat plays with a mouse, doing their killing by inches.

The sack was drawn off her head. She was turned on her back. She felt something soft and feathery going up her nostrils. Had she not read somewhere that the brain could be reached in this way? To be killed by a feather tickling the brain! What more maddening torture could the devilish ingenuity of Orientals devise. And the awfulness of it was that the first sensation it gave was one of pleasure, as if her torturers were cleansing her nostrils of the chaff, before the feather was thrust up to the brain. She had now the use of her ears, and could gather enough from their whispers to know that they had found one of the dispatches.

But which was it?

One thing she learnt at once, that she was not going to be killed or tortured further than by the tightness of her bonds, unless she attempted to give the alarm, which was plainly impossible, for her hands were manacled behind her and her feet were so tightly bound that she could not move, and the gag which she had mistaken for a garotte, prevented her from uttering a sound.

One of her assailants then whispered to her in English that her hands would be unbound and bound less tightly if she made no attempt to give the alarm, but that she would be killed if she contrived to make any noise.

She wondered if she could make any noise—her nerves were in such a state of excitement that she almost tried. She could not tell if she was not trying, but no sound came, except the light tread of several

pairs of feet, and the curious Japanese breathing—almost animal-like, a form of inarticulate speech. So secretive a people must be capable of dead silence—they had shown it indeed when she entered her room, which seemed quite empty, though there were several men in it. But now they had apparently no fear of being disturbed, for they carried on their whole conversation in snorts and pants and indrawings.

No time was lost in showing the subject of their conversation; it related to a flat board, a little over five feet long, on which she was laid as soon as her hands were unbound, back downwards. Then with more breathings they set about their work of fastening her to the board which was apparently full of holes, with a fine twine which was wound round her neck and body and arms and legs, until she thought that every inch of her must be covered. Her wrists had to be untied before she could be laid on her back, and secured to the board, but the painful cord which bound her ankles together so tightly, had, either by inadvertence or design, been left. Her new bonds were not tight; there was such a multiplicity of them that she could be held close to the board with comparatively loose ligatures. The most unpleasant thing about her new bondage was that as soon as she was secured to the board, she was wrapped up in a huge Japanese quilt taken from her bed. They wrapped it closer and closer round her. She must be suffocated, though they did not apparently intend to do her any bodily harm which was not necessary to secure their escape with the document. They had laid her on the floor when she was rolled up in the quilt, and so closely did they envelop her, that she could not even hear their breathing.

For a long time—it must have been for hours—she waited, at first for something to happen, then for death. She gave up all hope of being discovered before she was smothered.

What a curious thing is the human mind. Her anxiety to know if her assailants had found the right treaty kept intruding on her expectations of death.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN I awoke next morning, I was of course surprised to find myself in his Excellency's library holding a loaded revolver—still more surprised to find that I had not shot myself, for I had gradually slid down to the floor in the process of going to sleep.

Otherwise there seemed nothing changed in the atmosphere. The servants were scuffling about the house as usual—Japanese servants do everything at a run, to show that they are making decent haste. It is the stereotyped mark of respect to people older or more important than themselves. I went up to my room to wash and change my clothes. Nothing seemed to have happened anywhere. I did think of knocking at Miss Palafox's door to know how she had got on, but it seemed unkind. She was sure to have been awake half the night, and it would do her good to sleep on.

Breakfast at the Legation was at nine. She did not come down to it. I ate mine with great deliberation, so as to be able to keep her company when she did come down.

Half-past nine struck without any sign of her. "Hadn't you better send up to inquire after Miss Palafox, sir," I ventured to ask Lord Clapham. "She may . . . have a nervous headache."

"You don't know Chiquita!"

Another quarter of an hour passed.

At the risk of being officious I asked: "Oughtn't her maid to give her another call, sir? I daresay she was a long time in getting to sleep, and may have overslept herself."

It was horribly selfish of me not to have let her sleep on if she were tired, but though I had not the courage to tell her pooh-poohing uncle so, I was beginning to feel anxious about her non-appearance.

Fortunately Lord Clapham liked people to be punctual, so he said to his butler: "Yoshi, please tell O-hana to call Chiquita San again."

In a large Japanese household servants are legion; each has his own particular department. The wonder was that it only took two to go and see if Chiquita was awake. Fortunately they are quick.

Yoshi was back before I was sure he was gone. Chiquita-San had locked her door, and refused to answer. Lord Clapham buried his head again in his newspaper. They had daily papers in Japan in all the Treaty Ports, two or three in some of them.

It seemed that she often locked her door to defy her uncle's breakfast hours. He was satisfied, if I was not. It was natural that I should take more interest in a beautiful young girl than the uncle of advanced years and philosophical habits did. So I cut my finger under the table to stain my pocket-handkerchief, and hurriedly left the table, saying that my nose was bleeding. I flew upstairs. I was sure that something was wrong.

I knocked at Chiquita's door louder and louder. I thundered, but still there came no answer. I flung myself against the door to burst it open, but without effect. Miss Palafox gave no sign, though I made such a noise that the Minister himself came flying upstairs.

"What on earth are you doing, Mr. Page?" he asked.

"Trying to burst into your niece's room, sir."

He displayed no anger; he was always idiotically reasonable.

"And pray may I ask what for?"

"Because there is something wrong."

"And how do you know?"

I felt inclined to shout, "As if any living woman would let a person try and hammer in her door without calling out if she was inside and had the power of speech left to her."

I put the idea into politer language. His lordship said simply:

"Of course not, of course not," as if we were having a rhetorical argument.

Then I remembered what most schoolboys know, that if you want to break a door open you must not go for the lock, but for the panel above it. I put my shoulder through that at the first charge, and saw, lying on the floor rolled up in a *futon*, an inanimate body. Lord Clapham really did wake up then, and sent the major-domo flying for a coal-hammer. But a *riksha* boy, who had found his way in, in true Japanese style, to see what the matter was, put his head through the door like a monkey, and found the key inside. The assailants had evidently made their escape by the window. I rushed in to tear the *futon* off Miss Palafox. It was sewn up. I pulled out my knife in feverish haste. I thought she was murdered; my hand shook as I ripped the *futon* open, but I found her alive and apparently uninjured, though bound and gagged.

The gag was very ingenious; it prevented her from uttering a sound without preventing her from breathing. She might have been bound by a spider. She lay on her back on a board pressed flat against it with a network of paper twine drawn through holes in it at intervals of about an inch, and tied round and round every inch of her body and each arm and hand and leg and foot. Her legs were also bound tightly together at the ankles with fine rope. Her head was held down by another ingenious contrivance of straps and pads, which kept it immovable, and was designed to prevent unnecessary pain.

Bound and sewn up like this, she could not make the slightest sound with moving. They had even laid her on the floor so that she could not give the alarm by rolling off the bed; a piece of courage which would have been the first act of a Japanese.

I saw it all at a glance. The reason why I had not been disturbed was because the spy had seen her take the dispatch.

Why had I not told her my plan? She would have left the safe alone, and the attack would have been made on me—a man, and armed. What an idiot I had been! Poor little Chiquita! After all her courage she had been bound and gagged, and perhaps cruelly injured. But she was still game, for the smile with

which she greeted me was intrepid as well as grateful. I think I should have liked it a little less intrepid. To cut her free with my knife took several minutes.

"Are you hurt?" I asked, with a tenderness which should have shocked Lord Clapham. But he was superior to human weaknesses.

"No, not really badly hurt, though my ankles are very painful. I think they must have forgotten to take the rope off them. For they were quite gentle—they only wished to prevent my giving the alarm."

"Why didn't you cry out?"

"I didn't see them. I had no light lest I should be discovered. I had shut the door and was just going to strike a light to see if they had found the forged treaty which I had arranged on the bed for their benefit, when suddenly a sackful of chaff was slipped over my head. I tried to yell, but the chaff poured into my mouth and stifled it. I could not struggle against it, for I was suffocated, and they did not take it off till they had tied my hands and feet and gagged me. That board——"

She did not finish the sentence; the stress was over and human nature exacted its toll.

"The whiskey, Yoshi," I cried, "and smelling salts!" and dipping a towel in cold water, began sprinkling her face.

She came round very soon, and then her uncle, who had been all tenderness and solicitation, was transformed back into the idiotic philosopher, and remarked in his bland, official voice:

"They must have been disturbed—they have left the jewels on the dressing-table."

"It was not her jewels they were after, sir; but the dispatch. They have stolen it."

"God bless my soul!"

Even with my previous knowledge of him, I was fairly staggered by his next remark:

"I don't see what use they can make of it."

This was innocent sangfroid with a vengeance. With a glance of withering scorn Chiquita turned on her uncle. I expected a scene. But it was only to tell him to leave her, and send a man with a hammer

and tacks and cardboard to make the room sufficiently private for her to finish dressing. She had no dress on when she was bound; the soft padded *kimono*, for which she had changed her rustling silk frock, she had flung on the bed as she entered the room.

"Will you stay outside and see that the man does it properly, Mr. Page?"

"Yes; might I ask you to stay and see to this, Mr. Page?" said his Excellency.

The servant tacked the cardboard on.

"Now, Mr. Page," cried Chiquita, "see if you can find a peep-hole."

I peeped and pressed with my fingers, but the job was well done. She opened the door, and called me in to see if it was all right from the inside.

"How idiotic! Of course it is," was my first thought. But Chiquita had something to say, and wanted to make sure that we were not overheard. There were dress-hooks on the door inside, and she had hung a heavy dress over the broken panel and the keyhole. As soon as the door was shut she flew in a fever of anxiety to the bed, and lifted the *kimono*. The dispatch was there. I was just beginning: "They have not taken it——" when she put her finger to her mouth, and handed me the dispatch to conceal about my person till I could put it in some safe place. Then with a flaming blush she flung the *kimono* on again. She had been too anxious up to this to notice that she had no dress on.

What a quandary! I was temporarily an employee of the British Legation, and I was asked to be the receiver of a dispatch stolen from it. Should I take Lord Clapham into my confidence? He had been such an idiot about precautions that I hesitated to play into the hands of his enemies.

"Now go," she said. "Tell them to send up my breakfast, and keep out of my uncle's way until you have seen me."

"Where shall I go?" I asked. I was in his Excellency's employ—at his beck and call.

"There," she said, opening the door to the little work-room, where she pulled her hats to pieces. "I

shall lock this door and you can lock the door into the passage. I often sit with my doors locked—Japanese servants never obey orders not to disturb you."

I was thankful that Tiffany, Finch, Rich and Jevons were all away. Rich in particular would have been sure to ask how it had happened. Lord Clapham would say in his helpless way that I had told him, and they would want to see me to find out how I knew, and how it was that I had not roused the house. Very likely he had gone to telegraph for them. I heard someone come upstairs, and knock at Chiquita's door. Now, I thought, the excitement is going to begin! but it was only the maid bringing her breakfast.

Chiquita dismissed her, and unlocking the door, brought her breakfast into her work-room, the prettiest and most luxurious spot in that barrack of a house, and changing the key to the other side of the door, re-locked it. She limped in, but was otherwise perfectly fresh and unruffled in her appearance, and miraculously dainty. This was accentuated by her peevish exclamation as she held her ridiculous little handkerchief to her nostrils:

"It has made me forget. I said I would never use that scent again!"

She ate her breakfast with the greatest composure. But I could see deep red lines—one, two, three—on her pretty wrists, where those tight cords had bound them.

"Aren't they frights?" she said. "But the Japs are sure to have some patent way of getting rid of the marks; or perhaps you may find me pricking them in with a tattoo-needle!"

Knowing that, like any Southerner, she would go on bantering for hours, I suggested:

"Hadn't we better discuss the situation before there is a hue and cry for me?"

She took a fresh help of kidneys.

"If you like."

"First tell me how it is that they forgot to take the dispatch you were martyred for."

"They did take the dispatch, but it was a forgery."

"Please explain."

"Life is a game of chess to us Spaniards. We see several moves ahead. I have found this very interesting."

"Moves!"

"Yes, first I thought that these men would never rest till they got the dispatch. Second that they would not read English well, if at all. Third, that they would not know Lord Salrose's handwriting. Fourth, what did they want it for? Fifth, what could I write in the forged dispatch to make most complete fools of them? These are some of the things I thought of."

"One minute, Miss Palafox, what time do the office hours begin?"

"It's Sunday," she said.

"Oh, I forgot; but won't your uncle wire for everybody to come back to see what's to be done?"

"Not he! He'll be more red-tapey than ever, so as not to let the Japanese suspect anything."

"How soon will he want me?"

"Oh, you are still thinking about that dispatch that you have in your pocket! Not for an hour, at least. Uncle never does anything without thinking about it for an hour."

Thus reassured, I settled down to let her finish the story.

"If I could forge a dispatch," she explained, "I held a trump card. To me it was not very hard. I had seen the dispatch; it was written on four sheets of blue foolscap, in Lord Salrose's own handwriting, and arrived in a long blue envelope marked "O.H. M.S.", sealed with the Royal Arms. It had no postmark; it was brought by a Queen's messenger, who took a message back a few hours afterwards. I read it. Uncle opened and answered it in this room, for privacy, and left it here when he went to give the answer. Uncle uses paper and envelopes just like Lord Salrose's. He brought more than he used, and I took some for practical jokes. He has a seal with the Royal Arms, and leaves it about like everything else. Yesterday, when I saw what was going to happen, I collared it, came up here, wrote a splendid new dispatch in Lord Salrose's handwriting, sealed it

up, and broke it open again, as my uncle had broken his dispatch. I meant to wait until it was dark and the coast clear to steal Uncle's keys, and substitute the forged dispatch in the safe; but when I found Mr. Jevons's revolver cartridges gone, I knew that there were accomplices in the house, and that I should be observed. So I determined to take the dispatch up to my room and push it down between a crack in the boards, and to lock the forged dispatch up in my dressing-case, where I was sure they would look for it."

"I saw you steal it. I was in the room guarding the safe with Jevons's revolver, and all but shot you. I only just recognised you in time."

"You didn't matter," she said with a smile of charming impertinence.

"Before I left my room I laid the forged dispatch on my bed near the door, so that I could change it the instant I got in the room. Two things were sure to happen. They would attack me directly I got back, and no lights would be used. I had to risk leaving the forged dispatch on my bed. I had the other under my *kimono*, which I slipped off just before I entered the room with the dispatch inside it, and threw it on my bed close to the wall. The forged dispatch was on the near side of the bed. I then advanced into the room. If there was no one lying in wait for me I was going to light the gas, and secrete the real dispatch. If I once got that safely under the boards I did not care what happened."

"For goodness' sake put it there now!" I cried. "It's nothing for you, but it might put me in a false position with your uncle."

She was on the verge of hating me as a coward; but her common-sense came to the rescue. She took the dispatch and went into her bedroom. When she called me in, I could not see a trace, though she showed me the crack down which it had gone.

I heaved a great sigh of relief.

"Now, please go on with the story. You left off at the most thrilling part."

"It was thrilling, I assure you! Fancy my feelings

when something soft and slippery and stifling went over my head, filling my mouth when I tried to scream. I was so frightened that I did not make any resistance while they were tying my hands and feet. They did not ask me where I had put the dispatch; their quick Japanese ears told them that I had laid something on the bed. As soon as they had gagged and trussed me, they began feeling for it. I heard the low chuckle as they left the room, and I lay there helpless, wondering if that chuckle meant that they had discovered the second dispatch."

"How did you get your uncle's keys?"

"I crept into his room as soon as I heard him snore, and took them from his dressing-table."

"Doesn't he lock his door?"

"No, the only thing in the world he is frightened of is fires. I was in an agony of fright."

"Of your uncle?"

"No, but that some Japanese would get in before me. I stood outside his door waiting nearly an hour to assure myself that he was asleep."

"Weren't you afraid of being attacked?"

"Not there. It was their game, if they had not already taken them, to let me steal his keys and run the risk of opening the safe and getting the dispatch."

"Weren't you afraid they would attack you as you went upstairs?"

"Yes, awfully; but I should have had time to scream out, and you had a revolver. I could have struggled till you came to my rescue."

"I wonder if any men are as plucky as you?"

"It wasn't really pluck. I had a presentiment that I shouldn't get hurt."

"It was pluck of the best kind. But what are we to do about the dispatch?"

"That's all right."

The game of chess was going to begin, and I had to take a hand.

"Poor Mr. Page! It is you whose pluck is going to be tested! What shall we do? Now we have been through the risk, we ought to enjoy the joke."

"The *joke*?" I gasped.

"Yes. We've drawn all our opponents' trumps, and now the game is in our hands."

"Oh, is it?"

"Of course. The Japanese Foreign Minister won't be back for a week. My uncle will do nothing. He knows the contents of the real dispatch by heart, and he has answered Lord Salrose; and, as you have heard, doesn't see what use anybody could make of it."

"Nor do I—unless they murder the whole Japanese Cabinet to stop the Treaty."

"But my dispatch is quite different. It will make all the conspirators show their hands, and there will be such lovely, *lovely* sells!"

"I think we ought to tell the truth about Lord Salrose's letter to your uncle. A matter like Treaty Revision is too important for practical joking."

She was furious.

"I am *going* to have my revenge for being tied and gagged all night. Your lips, as a gentleman, are sealed."

I made haste to express my preference that the announcement should come from hers. She was mollified, and changed her mind.

"I will tell him—now," she said, and, ringing for O-hana, sent the message which brought her uncle so quickly.

She sent me into her bedroom, and as she locked the door, told me to keep an eye and an ear on the keyhole. "You're in the conspiracy," she said.

In a minute or two Lord Clapham came in with his classic calm more disturbed than I ever remember to have seen it.

"You are not feeling worse," he asked, with a note of apprehension and even of tenderness.

"No, dear; it's good news, not bad, for once!"

"Well, what is it?" he asked, amiably.

"I have a clue to the whereabouts of the missing dispatch. But I shall not give it to you unless you promise to do as I tell you."

"How can I make such a promise?"

"It is not for me to say, but I shan't tell you any more unless you do."

He tried to be angry.

"Chiquita, I'll——"

"Don't bluster. If I told Lord Salrose how you've behaved you'd be recalled. You've no business to nearly let me get killed because you refuse to take precautions that any child could see were necessary. You've made such a mess of things that you must listen to a little advice."

The weak conscientious man tried to parley.

She rose and left the room, crying: "You'll have to find it yourself then!"

She had him in an *impasse* and meant to make her escape before he could find a way out.

"Chiquita," he called after her, "Chiquita, come back!"

She knew that this was equivalent to a promise, and came back demurely. She made the prettiest picture while she was acting her little play.

"Sit down on that arm-chair," she demanded. He obeyed. She perched herself on his knee, and kissed him affectionately.

"Now I will tell you all about it. I couldn't tell you before, because I wanted to give you a lesson in diplomacy. To begin with, those Japanese did not wish to steal that letter for nothing. Someone was to make some use of it. I know what was in it, for I read it, when you left it here."

"Chiquita!" he cried quite hotly, "this is a breach of all——"

She kissed him again. "Be quiet, you dear silly old uncle. You promised to do what you were told, and I am going to fulfil my part of the bargain and give you the clue about the dispatch. Well, they didn't steal it at all—I have it safe in my room. The one they carried off was a false one which I wrote."

"But how could you do it?"

"Oh, it wasn't so very hard. You left official paper and envelopes and the Legation seal about."

"Chiquita!"

"And I knew that my imitation of Lord Salrose's hand need not be very clever, because all our writing looks the same to the Japs, as all their writing looks the same to us."

He drew in his breath with amazement as she continued: "So when you were obstinate about not taking precautions, I wrote a fresh dispatch, denouncing the whole Treaty Revision business as infamous—which is the reverse of my true opinion—and saying that the great Powers were not going to put up any longer with Japanese arrogance, and that all of them except Russia had come to an agreement between themselves to draw up a Treaty for their future relations with Japan on a dignified and sensible basis, which they would support, if necessary, with a naval demonstration."

"Chiquita, this is monstrous! This will set all Japan ablaze."

"It will do nothing of the sort. If, as I am convinced, it was the *Soshi* who tried to get hold of it, they will be so alarmed that they will be only too glad to have the Treaty Revision which Lord Salrose agreed to in his dispatch, and if they were Russian emissaries, they will notice the omission of Russia and at once commence showing their hand."

"I admit," said Lord Clapham in the pedantic style of speaking which he could not drop, even when he was talking to his pretty niece, "that your deductions sound plausible, and if there were only the irresponsible persons who have committed this outrage to be taken into consideration, they might be allowed to stand, but we cannot commit the indiscretion of making the Imperial Government a party to this *jeu d'esprit*."

He delivered this with the air of melancholy wisdom which he always wore when he was convinced that his country was in the wrong, or of his own inability to serve her.

"Uncle," said Chiquita, "I am not a great reader. Don't be impressed by what I am going to tell you, for I only read it in *Tit-Bits*. Napoleon said that he had no such word as 'impossible' in his dictionaries. They were, of course, saved, like everything else, down to his washing bills, as curios, and I think you must have made a collection of them."

"Well, you must acknowledge that this is impossible."

"I acknowledge nothing of the sort. If you'll telephone to the Japanese Foreign Office to send their confidential interpreter, I'll do the rest."

Lord Clapham submitted to the inevitable with the dignity of a Prometheus. In less than half an hour, Mr. Shujio was in the room, urbane and perfectly dressed in the English style.

When he arrived, he was received by Chiquita in her work-room. I was still to remain in her bedroom at the keyhole, as it was so important that I should be in full possession of the particulars. She received him with winning graciousness.

"How quick you have been! Lord Clapham would have been here, but we did not think it possible that you could have been here so soon!"

This deliberate invention was necessary, perhaps; but she had certainly started pretty well.

"I must apologise for receiving you here, but I am confined to my own apartments by the injuries I received in an aggravated assault made upon me by some Japanese last night."

"Please to tell me! The disgrace—it is so great that it is impossible for my country to get over it—but please to tell me."

She held out her wrists that he might see by the cuts on them how tightly they had been tied behind her back when she was secured.

Mr. Shujio expressed the most courtly regret.

"And my ankles are much worse. I haven't had the courage to pull off my stockings and look at them yet, but they hurt horribly."

Mr. Shujio's face grew more and more eloquent, and in a few pithy sentences she described how her hands had been released for her to be laced down to the board, but the cords which tied her legs together at the ankles so tightly had been left on to keep her helpless while she was being put on the board, and afterwards forgotten by the robbers.

I think it must have been forgetfulness myself, since when I released her I found each leg closely laced to the board from the thigh to the ankle. To leave the cords round her ankles was both unnecessary and cruel.

When Mr. Shujio had finished making the proper expressions of regret, he asked her if she had any idea of what had prompted the outrage.

"Unfortunately, yes," replied Chiquita, impressively. "The dispatch giving Lord Salrose's reply about Treaty Revision has reached Lord Clapham, and will be presented to your Foreign Office as soon as your Minister returns from his holiday. Some members of the Young Japan party had become aware of this, and came to Lord Clapham to demand a sight of Lord Salrose's reply."

"Treason to his Most Sacred Majesty the Emperor," cried Mr. Shujio, with unaffected horror.

"So Lord Clapham thought, and though I detected their plot to make their way into the Legation at night and steal it, he refused to take any precautions, because he felt sure that no Japanese would commit such an outrage!"

This again was a tolerably free version of what had passed between uncle and niece, but it served its purpose.

"I, however, knew that they meant it, and as Lord Clapham refused to distrust the Japanese"—Mr. Shujio bowed—"I myself took the necessary measures for maintaining the secrecy of the dispatch intended for the eyes of the Imperial Government only."

He was now profoundly interested, and began to mingle his fine diplomatic manners with Japanese grunts and breathings in a most picturesque way.

"I could see only one way to do it, and that was to conceal the real dispatch. I had made an imitation of it to leave where the——" She paused for a polite word.

"The robbers," he said briefly.

"To leave where the robbers would find it."

"Hey! You have the brain of a man!" He wished to pay her the highest possible compliment.

"You flatter me too much," she replied with a dainty little smile, intended to convey one thing to him and another to me. "But I tried to serve the Imperial Government to the humble extent of my power."

He bowed yet more profoundly.

"For in the false dispatch I wrote the exact opposite of what was written by Lord Salrose, so as to compel the prompters of the outrage to show their hand to the Government—do you understand that expression of ours, 'show their hand'?"

"It is an expression of *the* Poker."

She allowed the "*the*" to pass; she did not mean to sacrifice Mr. Shujio's good will for a word of three letters. She went on to tell him most dramatically how she had prepared the false dispatch in the afternoon, but had been unable to get hold of the real one till Lord Clapham was asleep, and she could steal his keys; how I was in the room where the Legation safe was kept without her knowing it, and almost shot her with Jevons's revolver; how she laid the false dispatch on the bed for the robbers to find it, hoping that they would search her room while she was away, and carry it off; how this part of the plot had failed because they knew it was still in the safe, and how she had managed to save the real dispatch in the second she had in her bedroom before she was bound.

For a Japanese Mr. Shujio was enthusiastic.

"And I have the real dispatch safe," she said in conclusion, "and the reason why you have seen me and not Lord Clapham is that I am the only person who knows where it is (another conscious inaccuracy), and I wish to consult you as to what should be done for its safety. We have a proverb in Spanish which means, 'as jealous as a secret,' so I will not tell you where it is till you have decided what to do."

His smile expressed as much as a column of a newspaper, and he thought for two or three minutes. At the end of that time all he said was, "I will go and consult the Acting Minister."

"It will be more regular then for you not to see Lord Clapham till you return," suggested Chiquita, mindful of the time that was likely to be consumed in ceremony and the repetition of official regrets.

"Madame!" said the courtly Japanese with the most beautiful bow. The single word expressed everything.

In Japan nothing is left to chance except death. Before he left the house, Mr. Shujio asked if he might use the telephone, and before his *jinriksha* was out of sight, a patrol of constables from the Palace Police Station, which is close to the Legations, arrived at a double, and requested permission to investigate and assume temporary protection at the Legation. Before Chiquita and I had finished replying to their questions, which were much facilitated by my familiarity with the Japanese language, we heard the tramp of infantry, and a detachment of impassive little demons, all shakos and long blue tunics and white spats, with bayonets fixed in their *Muratas*, arrived, and were stood at ease in open order outside the Legation gates. Soon they stiffened to attention as one of the victorias favoured by Japanese Ministers drove up, containing the Under-Minister left in charge of Foreign Affairs, during the absence of his chief.

What passed between him and Lord Clapham I only know by hearsay from Chiquita, for the Minister brought his official interpreter, Mr. Shujio, with him. But as Lord Clapham knew so little about the matter, it must have been confined chiefly to diplomatic politenesses. The more important part of the proceedings commenced when the Minister desired to be taken to Chiquita, who was in her work-room with myself, and the omniscient Japanese policemen. There were more official regrets expressed through Mr. Shujio, and then at last we came to grips. The Acting Minister had come, not only to pay the official call of the Japanese Foreign Office, but also to take charge of the dispatch, sealed in any manner the British Minister might think necessary, until his superior, who had been telegraphed for, returned to receive it officially from Lord Clapham's hands.

The scenes which followed bordered on comedy. First of all there was a procession of Lord Clapham, always dignified and ungainly, and the Acting Minister and Mr. Shujio, and the police into Chiquita's bedroom. In a very few minutes the board below which the all-important dispatch had taken refuge was raised up. The police seemed to have brought a house-breaker's

portable tool-set in their pockets. Under their skilful hands the board came up almost automatically. The second scene of the comedy took place in the library, when the ineptitude displayed by Lord Clapham in the sealing up of the dispatch suggested to me that the impression of the British Arms on sealing-wax in the Legation at Tokyo must ordinarily be performed by the hands of Chiquita.

When the dispatch had been sealed and delivered into the Acting Minister's hands, and he had, with a most elaborate leave-taking, climbed into his victoria, an escort of cavalry, whose arrival I had not noticed, formed up in front and behind the carriage, and the whole went off at a brisk trot to the Foreign Office.

In that land of etiquette the escort was doubtless quite as much as a guard of honour as a protection to that fateful dispatch. The anxiety of the Japanese authorities to make reparations did not stop here. For later in the day the places of the infantry were taken by an officer and detachment of the Emperor's own Guards.

Japanese politeness is a very fine study.

CHAPTER V

THE Tiffanys got back from Miyanoshita in time for Monday's tiffin. Lord Clapham was not an exacting chief; there was no real reason why Tom Tiffany should put in an appearance at the Legation before lunch. They had had a most enjoyable trip to Miyanoshita, for they had asked Candida Begg to make the fourth to themselves and Randolph Rich.

Candida was an orphan who lived in Yokohama. Her father, who had survived her mother by many years, had died while he was in business there, leaving her six hundred a year—a comfortable income in Japan. And as Japan was her world, she saw no reason for leaving it, but stayed on with occasional acquaintances among the annual crops of globe-trotters to vary the somewhat restricted round of Yokohama society. Candida Begg was the pride of Yokohama. For ten or fifteen years the English in the settlement had told each other that no handsomer or smarter woman ever came to Japan among the multitude of globe-trotters than their Candida, with her slim, erect figure and faultless chin. No one could have believed that such frocks could be achieved simply by a good memory, clever Chinese tailors, and the way she carried herself. If you spoke to her for half an hour you could never forget the beautiful mouth full of white, white teeth and the dark blue eyes, which gave her such an expression of frank and smiling sincerity. You could see what a good sort she was at a glance.

Randolph Rich was just the type she admired; and she could not conceal the fact. His very recklessness appealed to the finest horsewoman in Japan; his inordinate love of practical jokes tickled her sense of humour. They became the closest of friends.

The party had enjoyed themselves hugely up at Miyanoshita, and Candida had returned to Tokyo with the Tiffanys.

All four of them were waiting lunch for Orlando Jevons, who burst in nearly an hour late, very white, and as overcome as if he had seen a ghost.

"A terrible thing has happened!" he cried.

"Where?"

"At the Legation!"

"Miss Palafox is not murdered," suggested Mrs. Tiffany, with grim sarcasm.

"Precious nearly—and that is not the worst of it!"

"Then something has happened to Lord Clapham," she hazarded with well-feigned anxiety.

"Something has happened to Lord Clapham," he said, oracularly.

"Tiff, you'll be *Chargé d'Affaires*," said his wife.

"England is saved!" she added with mock heroics.

Tiffany gave a grin which showed the self-importance enshrined in that vacuous but amiable personality. He was a small, clean-shaven, curly-headed man, whose large, rather silly, mouth was redeemed by its good teeth, and whose large blue eyes were robbed of character by their prominence. A short irregular nose gave his face a merry cast which was not belied. He was a cheerful, good-natured sort of man. He had the spruce appearance which comes naturally to a man so fond of horses; and in Japan, where the possession of one carriage and pair marks you out as a prince or a Cabinet Minister, the fine stable he kept and his English coachman and groom excited an astonishment that bordered on wonder. They could not understand any minor official being so rich as to support such splendour. As a matter of fact, the Tiffanys were rich—the Honourable Tom Tiffany had married a rich young widow, who was equally fond of luxury and display.

Mrs. Tiffany was more of a character and had more character than her husband. She was not beautiful, and her figure certainly could not be compared to Candida Begg's; but she was tall, and carried herself well, and had a plumpness that was no more than attractive, kept within the bounds of beauty by admirable corsetting. She would have been pretty still if it had not been for an excessive use of powder, and

her frocks, like her husband's horses, were the wonder of Japan. Chiquita was an extravagant little monkey, who clad herself in garments which were inspirations of becomingness, regardless of expense. Mrs. Tiffany thought of nothing but dress and entertainments, especially dinners, which gave the best scope to her culinary resourcefulness and her love of table-talk.

She could ride well, but was so conscious of looking stout in her habit, that she was glad to get anyone else to ride with her husband. Riding was his link with Randolph Rich, who had no other amusement in a land where foreigners could get no shooting. The foreign residents in Yokohama played tennis; in Tokyo they were too "slack." Riding was also the graceful Candida's link with the Tiffanys. Mrs. Tiff liked her favourite horse exercised, but had a horror of its being ridden by a man. Candida was devoted to riding, but had not had a horse of her own since her father died, and Mrs. Tiff was not slow to recognise that Candida was a girl who could keep any man in a good humour and in his place. So the present was not by any means the first excursion they had taken together.

Tiffany winked, and his wife elevated her eyebrows, as Jevons discharged his bombshell. For that very morning, as they swung down that incomparable glen, with a clear brown mountain river tumbling over mossy boulders at its bottom and its sides thicketed with flowering trees, from Miyanoshita to Yumoto, in their Hong-Kong chairs high on the shoulders of coolies, Mrs. Tiffany had called out to the men who were walking beside them:

"I wonder what mess the chief will have got himself into? He has been two days without any of us to keep him straight!"

"It wouldn't do for me or Rich to say. Our tongues are tied as members of the staff," replied her husband with a pomposity, which in such a man might have been either real or burlesque.

"It was rather like leaving a child with a box of matches to leave him alone with the Treaty," said his more fearless wife.

"There's Cheeky," suggested Rich, "and she's pretty level-headed."

"That imp!" cried Mrs. Tiff, wrathfully. "She does nothing but get into mischief herself—she has the naughtiness of the serpent."

"It's the wisdom of the serpent, isn't it?" asked Candida.

"No, I don't believe in serpents being wise, or they'd kill off every human being in the night. They have such unique opportunities for secret assassination. But they're the wickedest things."

Jevons's white face saved him. No one could be more withering on occasion than Mrs. Tiffany, and after early rising, a long chair-, tram-, and railway-ride, from Miyanoshita, she was not by any means inclined to be kept waiting from the flesh pots of her own cuisine, for which she had been hankering ever since she left her front door on the Saturday.

"What an absurd man Mr. Jevons is," she had been saying. "He will let the soup get cold to finish some piece of Legation work that would do just as well this afternoon or to-morrow afternoon, or next year. Nothing ever happens here; we just go on, like the trees, getting mossy."

It was at this moment that Jevons burst in.

"Now, Jevons," cried Mrs. Tiff, who was apt in moments of excitement to dispense with the "Mr.", "tell us what has happened. Have you seen a ghost?"

"There's been a burglary at the British Legation," he gasped.

"Are all Chiquita's jewels gone?" she asked, maliciously, knowing of his weakness for the Minister's niece.

"Worse than that—the Treaty!"

She went off into fits of laughter.

"It's no laughing matter," he protested.

"That's just what it is," she retorted; "*an affaire pour rire* if ever there was one! Fancy a Power like Great Britain taking these monkeys as men and making treaties with them! I wonder they don't hold their Diet in the tree-tops instead of that stucco spa."

"Oh, Mrs. Tiffany, I must protest! It's monstrous talking like this. The Japanese are a civilised power, and we must treat them as——"

"Power!" she said with a world of scorn in her voice. "They're about as much a Power as they are civilised!"

Starting on his favourite subject helped him to pull himself together. "I tell you that if Japan were to go to war to-morrow with one of the Great Powers, we should find that she was as strong as any of us."

"Oh, my good Jevons!—tut, tut, tut! Tell us about the burglary."

"They nearly killed Miss Palafox."

"Why Miss Palafox? Was she the only man in the place?"

"No; Page was there." He accepted her innuendo about their official head.

"Well, what was Page doing?" she asked sharply. "Snoring?"

"No; he was down in the library guarding the Legation safe with my revolver."

"I'm glad of that. I shouldn't like to have lost my opinion of him—but why didn't he hear? Why did they attack Chiquita? Where was she?"

"Miss Palafox was in her room," he said, to stem the current of questions.

"Well, what did they want there? Her jewels?"

"No, I told you, the Treaty."

"Does she take all the Legation papers as well as the silver plate to her room at night?"

"She took that."

"And the best thing she ever did in her life," Mrs. Tiffany said.

"But I say," cried Tiffany, rubbing his hands—it took some time for a situation to reach him—"what did the bally Japs want with the Treaty? They were going to have it anyhow as soon as their Minister came back to receive it."

"You don't suppose," began Jevons, putting on his oratorical voice, "that the Imperial Government has had anything to do with this outrage?"

Tiffany rested his elbows on his knees and clapped

his hands feebly and fairly shook with laughter as he said: "Imperial Government! I call that too damned funny! Do you mean the Japs?"

"That word is most offensive to them. How would we like to be called Brits?"

"I think it would be jolly good—sounds like chips of the old block."

"The only thing is that it's a bit too like 'chits,'" said Rich, who, having done nothing but sign chits ever since he had set foot in Japan, was beginning to be pestered to settle them. He had just finished the cigarette which he had lit when Jevons burst in with the news. That was his way of thinking. At the Tiffanys' house people smoked where they pleased. The cigarettes Mrs. Tiffany provided were dreams, and she got through a good many herself in the course of the day.

Jevons was not disconcerted by the frivolity of his colleagues, but gravely repeated: "Of course the Imperial Government had nothing to do with the outrage."

"Bother the Imperial Government," cried Mrs. Tiff. "We want the police news. We've not heard yet how the Treaty got into Chiquita's bedroom."

"How did the Japs know about it?" asked Rich, who was fairly shrewd, though he was such an awful harum-scarum.

"Well, that is the point, if you'll excuse me for answering Rich's question before yours, Mrs. Tiffany." He gave a polite little foreign bow.

"Oh, answer any question first, but get on!"

"You know what the *Soshi* are, Mrs. Tiffany?"

"Oh, yes; the people who have too much education and too little to eat, and wear bowlers with their *kimonos*!"

"That describes them in a way. They correspond so curiously to our Socialists that I should be tempted to think that there was some affinity in the names if I did not know it to be etymologically impossible."

"Jevons," she said warningly, "I can't stand etymology on an empty stomach."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Tiffany. Well, the *Soshi*

—the Young Japan party—knowing the power of their country—they don't, of course, know it better than their Ministers, but they have less reserve in showing the mailed hand——”

“Oh, draw it mild, old man!” chuckled Tiffany. “Isn't the *mailed hand* coming it a little bit too thick for Japan? That's German slang, when they know the other chap won't hit them back,” he said, minuetting across the room, squaring his fists.

“We're not going much forrarder,” complained Mrs. Tiffany. “What *did* happen?”

“The Young Japan party——”

Another guffaw in which Rich joined, and even Candida showed her white teeth, warmed him into unwonted directness.

“——Went to the Minister and demanded to see the Treaty.”

“Well, I'm damned!” said Tiffany.

Rich looked as black as thunder and muttered: “Blasted little monkeys! . . .”

“And of course he made his best bow and handed it to them,” said Mrs. Tiffany.

“The Minister didn't. He met the demand with proper dignity.”

“I don't believe it!” cried Mrs. Tiffany.

“I assure you——”

“And so they tried to burgle it?” said Tiffany.

“I'm not sure that I don't think better of them.”

“I am sure that I think a good deal better of Chiquita,” said Mrs. Tiffany. “She knew the kind of man her uncle was, and perhaps didn't know the kind of men they were—or perhaps she did. She has pluck!”

“She'd enjoy it,” said Rich, “until she got hurt. Did she get hurt? I hope not. She's a dear little girl, though she has the cheek of the devil.”

“I regret to say that she was injured severely,” replied Jevons, to whom the way in which Rich and the Tiffanys discussed their chief was always painfully disagreeable. Neither Lord Clapham nor the nation to which they were accredited seemed to him proper subjects for the atmosphere of slang in which they lived.

"How?" asked Rich, turning quite serious and getting up to do something. He was a man of action—at school his fists were always flying about.

"They threw a sack of chaff over her head, and flung her down and bound her hand and foot, and then tied her flat against a board and sewed her up in a *futon*."

"I wonder that there is anything of her left," remarked Mrs. Tiffany.

"Get on!" said Rich curtly. "Was she hurt—really hurt?"

"Very severely. Her wrists and ankles were shockingly cut with the cords, and she was terribly shaken."

"The brutes!" hissed Rich. "If I can find them out, I'll——"

"There's no necessity for that—it's an international affair. The Imperial Government will——" The men were too angry to laugh now; only Mrs. Tiffany interjected:

"I think we can do without the Imperial! Are the Government going to take the matter up?"

"Of course, the fullest——"

"Have you heard?" she asked mercilessly.

"The Minister has reported the matter."

"Lunch, lunch, *lunch*!" cried Mrs. Tiffany almost triumphantly. She knew when Jevons was at the end of his tether, and her inside was crying out for her own admirable food.

"I say, Jevons," cried Rich. "Right to the point, man, is there anything that wants doing? Any danger that we've got to look after?"

"None whatever. When the Minister sent in his report, a guard of Japanese police was mounted at the Legation, and later on the Emperor sent a picket of his own body-guard, commanded by an officer, to make the *amende honorable* to a friendly Power."

The dignity of Jevons's language restored the good humour of the party sufficiently to make them approach the lunch in the temper it deserved.

CHAPTER VI

It took a good deal to upset the British Legation at Tokyo under Lord Clapham's philosophical rule, but there were certain deviations of the routine on that Sunday following the burglary which has taken its place among the principal dates of Japan.

Chiquita could not come down to lunch; she was very tired, and could not put a foot to the ground. But she sent down word that she would be able to see me at tea-time in the little work-room off her bedroom.

I went up, expecting to find a darkened room and a white face lying back on pillows; instead of which I found her radiant, sitting up with a rug wrapped round her legs and surrounded with exquisite boxes of gold lacquer, with rich red silk cord round those which had not been opened, tied in the elegant and fantastic Shogun knots which are the formal way of fastening up presents in Dai Nippon. I knew, of course, that the boxes were not for her to keep; each bore an elaborate crest showing the noble house from which it came, and was only a vehicle for containing the actual presents. You were no more expected to keep the box in which the present was sent than you would be expected to keep the *jinriksha* which carried the box to your residence.

I had been long enough in Japan to know whose crests they were; and among them I noticed those of the members of the Cabinet and the principal nobles of the Court. These presents were to show official abhorrence of the outrage, and some of them were not of much further use to a foreigner. But Miss Palafox was none the less pleased with them—she seemed to take as much pride in lengths of heavy brocade a foot wide, of colours which could only be used for Japanese *obis*, as she did in exquisite fans and delicate little vases of old Satsuma-ware wrapped

in several bags of faded silk. Some of the small pieces of lacquer and ancient ivories were superb. The first thing that occurred to my mind was what presents she would send in return. The Japanese are so extraordinarily studious in their choice of presents, and I knew that she was far too indolent to choose the right thing.

"There ought to be a Present-Secretary attached to the Legation," she remarked, which was plain truth; as was the next remark: "They manage those things much better in Spain, where you don't keep the presents at all. It would save such a lot of trouble and time and expense," she said. "If I could only return the contents as well as the boxes!"

And she meant it. She had no taste for collecting. In her own apartments she had as few Japanese things as the most cross-grained English merchant in all Yokohama. Fortunately she was well off, so the returning of the presents was not the tax on her pocket that it might have been.

I found out how much money it cost her, because the idea of a Present-Secretary took the tangible form of her getting Jevons, who knew as much about Japanese prices as any curio-dealer, to buy the presents.

"I have something on my mind to say to you, Miss Palafox. I can't help feeling guilty of your injuries."

"Why, how absurd! How could you have prevented them?"

"In the most obvious way—obvious now. When you took the Treaty out of the safe, I ought to have followed you upstairs and passed the night outside your door."

"But why?"

"Two reasons have been as plain as a pike-staff to me ever since it happened. I was trying to guard the Treaty, so when the Treaty was out of the safe it was my place to guard the Treaty and not the safe. Then I ought to have taken it for granted that we were watched—that they would know you had taken the Treaty, and that from this moment you would be the objective of their attacks. If I had followed you up, I could have disposed of one or two of them with the

revolver, and the noise might have frightened them off, or attracted help."

"I'm so thankful you didn't," she said. "I don't think that anybody would have come to our help except Uncle. The servants, even if they had not been bribed, would have been too frightened, and we should very likely all have been killed. They were sure to have been armed, and the Japanese does not hesitate to die or to kill when he has an important object in hand."

"It's very spirited and generous of you to think so, but at the same time I shall never cease to blame myself."

"Uncle is the only one to blame. It isn't only his absurd refusal to have the Legation guarded, but it's just the same about servants."

"What do you mean, Miss Palafox?"

"Why, when we came here, Mr. Jevons told us that we ought to have *Samurai* servants, because in cases of trouble they would die in our defence."

"Surely he didn't expect a trouble of this kind?"

"No, not of this kind; something far more serious. Mr. Jevons told my uncle that unless the Japanese were given Treaty Revision, there might be most serious riots, and that in case of such riots, though the English were readier than any other Power to grant Revision, the mob were sure to direct their assaults against the English first, because the ignorant Japanese regard all white people as English."

"What possible objection could your uncle have found to following Jevons's advice?"

"It was his idiotic theoretical Liberalism. A diplomatist, he said, ought to trust the people to whom he is accredited. He persisted in regarding the *Samurai* servants you get in most decent Japanese houses as unchanged from the swaggering two-sworded men-at-arms who used to cut down unoffending people for not withdrawing themselves far enough from the road when a great noble was passing! He thought that Mr. Jevons was asking him to hire bravoës for the defence of the Legation!"

"How funny!"

"It isn't as funny as his thinking that Mr. Jevons

himself was as anti-Japanese as the English merchants in Yokohama. It was months before he believed in Mr. Jevons."

"That's funnier still! Nine-tenths of the English in Japan think that British interests are going to rack and ruin because he is so under the influence of the designing Jevons."

"Do you think so?" she asked me, point-blank.

This was a difficult question to answer. I parried it. "As I am a paid official in the employ of the Japanese, I don't think I must express an opinion, but when a man like Philip Sandys thinks so, it's natural that the English should be alarmed."

"Well, I think it would be a good thing if British interests did suffer," said Chiquita. "I'm a Spaniard, you know, and I don't see why the English should not be stopped as my people were—it is not good for one nation to inherit the earth—not good for the other nations, I mean," she added, with a merry little laugh, so as not to be preaching.

I looked at her quizzically.

"I think I know what you would like to say," she continued.

"What?"

"That, judged from this point of view, my uncle is an ideal ambassador."

"Well, he does belong to the school who would like to see Great Britain diminishing her responsibilities——"

"What a nice way of putting it! Mrs. Tiffany calls him an apostle of scuttle."

"I should think that there's not much love lost between you and Mrs. Tiffany."

"Not much," said Chiquita, "though I should miss her if she went away."

"Do tell me why."

"Because she's the only person I can fight with, and there's so little to do in Japan."

"Don't you ever fight with your lovers?"

"Lovers are poor things; they fight with their hands tied. Mrs. Tiffany——" The sentence was never finished. Without the least warning she went deadly

white. I thought she would faint, but a dose of sal volatile, which stood on the table by her side, and for which she motioned with her hand, stopped that.

What a puzzling woman she was! A minute before she had been all pugnacity and paradox. Now she was gentle and feeble, and to my mind her attraction was increased—not that I was not charmed with her spirit and vivacity, but that I had never seen her in such a feminine mood.

“What is the matter?” I asked.

“The blood had all gone away from my head—to my legs, I suppose. The ropes have made them awfully inflamed and swollen. I have had wet bandages on them all day. The doctor thought I might faint—he knows that I suffer from anæmia in the head, and of course this was liable to bring it on.”

“Are you in much pain?” I asked.

“A good bit, but it’s not so bad as it was.”

“How plucky you are. I hadn’t the smallest conception that you were in pain. I thought you were as jolly as a sand-boy.”

“It’s only men who can’t be jolly and in pain at the same time,” she said, brightening up again.

“Are you dreadfully dull in Japan, Miss Palafox?” I asked. “From your sarcasm about Mrs. Tiffany I gathered that you were.”

“Yes, awfully dull sometimes.”

As I knew her better, I found that she could be literally truthful at times, though her insincerity at other times made me hate her.

“You don’t collect things, I think you say?”

“No.”

“You don’t paint or write?”

“No.”

“Do you play or sing?”

“Only to amuse myself when nobody is in the room who matters.”

This meant Lord Clapham, I suppose, and was sufficiently severe.

“Haven’t you ever thought of learning Japanese?”

“No, but I think I will. If I knew Japanese I could talk to the people. Who shall I get to teach me?”

"I'll teach you if you like."

"Do you know Japanese?" she asked admiringly, for the moment quite forgetting that it was my knowing Japanese which had taken me there. In the flash she recollected. "Oh, of course——" It might have been to cover her mistake that she asked with the charming graciousness which it was in her power to assume. "Will you teach me?"

"I should be delighted, if your uncle has no objection."

Her answer came like a douche of cold water.

"He can have no objection. I shall pay for the lessons myself."

If she had hit me on the mouth and made my lips bleed I could not have felt more staggered. A precept which my old father, whom I can hardly remember for anything else, taught me came in handy: "When you are in doubt what to say, change the subject, unless you can hold your tongue for five minutes." That, as he knew, it is hard for anybody, who has not the feelings of a pig, to do.

"Would you like me to send your maid to change your bandages?" I asked. She smiled gratefully, and I left the room.

My first impulse was not to return—it was insulting of her. I was leaving the Legation the next day to go back to my work. I could see as little as possible of her till then, and I need never come near the Legation again. I flattered myself that she would miss me. I am not vain, but I could not help being conscious that most women, at any rate Englishwomen, would consider me more desirable than Jevons, and more interesting than Tiffany! Finch she detested for not taking more care to keep the secret about his domestic arrangements; and she had told me with her own lips that she hated Rich. She would miss me perhaps—but how could she miss me one quarter as much as I should miss her when I had got over the sting of the blow? There were plenty of young men in Japan, nice young men some of them, at the various Legations for instance; and she could speak all their languages; but there was no girl like her in Tokyo or

anywhere else, so far as I knew. She was so deliciously pretty and vivacious and graceful, and though she could snub one cruelly like this, she was also capable of being utterly companionable at other times. Standing on her dignity was not a usual fault with her—perhaps she gave out these snubs when she was conscious of having gone too far in the other direction. It may have been only part of her inconsiderateness. I don't think an English girl could have been so inconsiderate and irresponsible as she was at times. She was selfish as an animal.

The upshot of it all was that I determined to do nothing, but to let things develop themselves. I did not go back to her room. She was unable to come down to dinner, and after dinner a number of Japanese Functionaries came in to pay complimentary visits to Lord Clapham about the outrage, and stayed till long after she had been moved into bed.

The next morning I took care to leave before she was up, and made all my inquiries about her state to Lord Clapham, who could be trusted to repeat them in such a lackadaisical way that no one would have any conception of how much or how little expression I had put into them.

It was one thing to dismiss myself from her presence, another thing to dismiss her from my thoughts. I was almost saying it is one thing to bounce out of the presence of the woman you love. I could have loved her, I was sure, if she had not insulted me. I wished I was as sure that I could not love her now. Days passed, and I could not help thinking of her and wishing for all the world that she had not done this thing. Every other thing I could recall about her was charming and companionable—we seemed to have been going along the path of friendship hand in hand till that moment. I told myself that she was a selfish little animal with less sympathy than I had in my little finger; I told myself that her whole acquaintance with me must have been a tissue of insincerities, for up till that moment she had seemed so sympathetic, but it was all no use. Life was so empty without her. I was not in love with her, I was sure of that, but I hankered after the witchery of her presence.

I was glad afterwards that I had not actually thrown down the gauntlet to her. I felt that she had taken my sudden disappearance and non-return as a declaration of war.

I was not so mad, however, as not to know that I had done no more than *laesa majestas* demanded.

CHAPTER VII

RICH and Finch, being bachelors, took their meals at the Rokumei-kwan—the Nobles' Club, founded in the Castle of Tokyo for Japanese nobles and foreign gentlemen, to give the former a chance of becoming familiar with foreign club and social life.

But the Japanese had not yet begun to use it much. On the night after the Tiffanys' lunch there was not a Japanese in the smoking-room in which the English had gathered to discuss the great sensation—the burglary at the British Legation.

Tiffany and Jevons came in, like myself, almost directly after we had finished our dinners, and a few other Englishmen had been dining there, such as Captain Bradwardine, R.N., who was an instructor in the Japanese Navy, and Mr. Tudor-Rose, professor of Roman Law in the University of Tokyo, a pompous Welshman who believed far more in his family than in his subject. Mr. Haig, an old Scotch artist, whose sister had established a flourishing bookshop and English library at Yokohama when she found, after five years in Japan, that she could not keep house for her brother another day without a profession to fill in her spare time; the Anglican Dean of Tokyo, a curious old gentleman named Stott; and Doctor Macy, an American Nonconformist Minister had also dropped in for news, just before we made our appearance; while one English merchant, Mr. Sandys, and the editors of the English newspapers had come over from Yokohama. Our appearance was the signal for a chorus of "Any news?" and a general drawing up of chairs in the verandah where people had gone out to cool or to smoke.

"There is most serious news," said Jevons, "for the forged treaty has not been recovered yet!"

Everybody started except myself, for this was the

first time that the forged treaty had been publicly mentioned. People knew of the burglary and the unsuccessful attempt to steal the real Treaty, but they did not know that the robbers had been robbed of their prey by being tricked into stealing a forgery.

"Well, if it is false, the bally Japs can do what they like with it," observed Tiffany, to whose wisdom as a diplomatist British affairs would have been entrusted if Lord Clapham had been placed *hors de combat*. Jevons stared aghast, and even I was surprised. For to have a false treaty knocking about in a place so like a powder magazine as Tokyo was capable of causing the gravest incidents, especially when the forgery was the work of such a monkey of mischief as Miss Palafox. I had more real reason to be scared than Jevons, for I knew by her impish satisfaction that she must have put something devilish into it, and angry as I was with her, I could not help taking a sort of partner's pride in her cleverness. How had she worded it, I wondered?

"I can assure you that the Chief thinks it is most serious," said Jevons to Tiffany.

"What can it matter with such a lot of rotters as the Japs?" cried Rich.

We had the electric light on the verandah because, as there was often no one to talk to there, a man liked to have a newspaper while he was smoking. The Club took in a splendid selection of English newspapers, as good as any London Club's, excepting the London dailies.

I happened to look at Captain Bradwardine, and saw a queer look on his face, but he said nothing. I was not surprised at this, because, though he was far the ablest Englishman in Japan, I had never in the three years that I had known him, heard him make a remark of the slightest general interest.

"I confess that I know nothing about it," began the Dean of Tokyo, a man younger in years than most Deans, but much older than his years from being a bachelor with no one to look after him.

A kind of gloom fell on the assemblage, for the Dean's confession of ignorance on any subject was

generally the prelude to about an hour's discourse upon it. But the Dean was popular; he was a man without prejudices outside of certain Church matters, and spent his private fortune liberally on everything except his personal expenses.

"I confess to knowing nothing about it," said the Dean, "but I should like to point out that a nation which is capable of stealing a treaty from the Legation of a friendly nation does not seem to me worthy of having a treaty. Our Greek and Roman history, to which we can turn for a parallel to every modern event, for history repeats itself, furnishes many examples of the unwisdom of making treaties with barbarians, who don't understand the motives from which our actions spring."

"The Japanese are not barbarians," broke in Jevons—he was quite heated. The tone of the Dean's speech filled him with indignation, and he was in dread of not being able to stem the tide of eloquence.

"We will waive the point of their being barbarians," said Tudor-Rose loftily, which was not handsomer of him than need be, considering that he was in their pay as a University Professor of Roman Law, "but they are not the kind of people to be admitted into the comity of nations."

Rich did not know any more than Tiffany what "comity" meant; neither of them were quite sure that Tudor-Rose, who spoke with rather a Welsh accent, was not trying to say "committee," and they were perfectly agreed with him that the Japanese were not a suitable people to be admitted into the committee of nations, whatever that meant. As it sounded rather fine, they cried, "Hear, hear!" Mr. Tudor-Rose was a well-born man and did not talk much, so they thought he must be an oracle, the fact being that he was so conceited that he did not think that people were worth the trouble of talking to them. His wife, who had projecting teeth, erred on the other side—Mrs. Tiffany said that her tongue was like a chaff-cutting machine, with its whirr, whirr, whirr; and Miss Palafox, who was selfish, would not have her in the Legation except when she was going to leave her

uncle by himself, Mrs. Tudor-Rose being generally regarded as a cure for loneliness.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Rich—he did not specify who the "you" was, but it was presumably Jevons; "Great Britain ought to take this opportunity of giving the Japs a jolly good licking. They are getting a damned sight too cocky—the Dutch and Spanish Ministers are afraid to go near their Foreign Office; they get such raggings. Our Chief is so lenient with them that I don't call it playing the game."

"I can picture what Sir Harry Parkes would have done," said Sandys, the Yokohama merchant, who had not spoken before. "He would have wired for the British Fleet from Hong-Kong, and sent an ultimatum within twenty-four hours."

"It's a good thing he isn't here," said a low, pleasant voice. It was Captain Bradwardine's.

"Why?" asked three or four simultaneously.

"Because I think that this is what he would have done."

"It's what these Oriental nations want," said Rich vindictively. He felt very sore about Chiquita Palafox being hurt by them, though he and she were always fighting like cat and dog.

"You must permit me to differ from you, Rich; or, at all events, to except the Japanese from the category. I have had more opportunities of knowing about them than you have, for I have been working in their dock-yards for years. Anyone who starts in to give them 'a jolly good licking' will soon find out that they are not one of 'these Oriental nations.' Their navy is not very large yet, though they are building all the time, but its efficiency is astonishing. Every man in it is trained both as a combatant and as an engineer, and it's the only navy in the world which can boast that."

"Oh, I say, Bradwardine!" put in Tiffany; "that's not a good egg! It's a chalk one—like the German Johnnies knowing all the lanes in England!"

"You can think what you like, Tiffany. I know, because I've been instructing the beggars. I shall get the sack soon because they know enough without

me, and the time has come when they don't want me to know how much they know. But there's one thing jolly certain, that if a shell cleaned out the engineers of a Japanese ship, their fighting officers could take their places in the engine-room, and, as I said, there's no other navy in which they can do that."

"You don't mean to say that the Japs could take on a European navy?" said Rich.

"I do. There isn't any nation in the world which could send a fleet to beat them in their own waters, bar Great Britain."

"Oh, my dear chap," laughed Tiffany, "you're like my wife and that Serene Highness who's been putting up at the German Legation."

"What's that, Tiff?"

"Well, she'd had rather a rocky time with him while he was explaining all that Germany had done for Japan, and he wound up with saying: 'Can you tell me, Mrs. Tiffany, what it is that makes the Japanese look to the Germans for everything?' She answered: 'Two great military nations, Your Highness!'"

In eighteen hundred and ninety-four the audacity of the comparison so dumfounded people that there was dead silence for a minute. Then Rich called out:

"I call that damned good!"

And Jevons smiled beatifically. He disliked the Germans, and he thought that the comparison was true.

"The time may come sooner than you think when the cap will fit England, and people will say of Great Britain and Japan, 'two great naval nations,'" said Bradwardine, grimly.

"Good old Bradwardine!" cried Tiffany. Captain Bradwardine was much attached to Tiffany; he knew the sincerity of that cheerful grasshopper's soul, so he allowed the remark to pass good-humouredly, though there were not many men from whom he would have stood it.

"I had no idea that you had such a high opinion of the Japanese as a fighting power," said Sandys, drawing his chair nearer Bradwardine's, in low tones designed for his ears only. He, too, was a great

friend of Bradwardine, who knew that Sandys' wife, Bryn, had no equal among the Englishwomen in Japan—that she was as full of character as she was beautiful.

"You ought to know, Sandys. Your wife was born here, and can speak the language like a native."

"You forget that we live in a set which hates and ignores everything Japanese. We don't agree with their ideas, but they are good fellows—honourable Englishmen—and they are the state of life into which it has pleased God to call us."

"I'm sorry for you. It's all so wrong-headed, this hostility of the British merchants to Japan."

"Well, you know how it is. The Japs we sell to, swindle us—and the Courts give them loopholes."

"If any other Yokohama Englishman had said that to me, I should have taken it with a peck of salt. Has this really been your own experience?"

"I am afraid it has. There was Okisawa, only last year. He ordered a consignment of hosiery through the Flemings, Miss Begg's father's old firm. When the consignment arrived, the market was flooded with a cargo of cheap German things, that brought down the price of hosiery. Fleming's lot was worth double as much, but Okisawa thought it was disadvantageous for him to buy them unless Fleming would let him have them at the German price. So he got out of taking them—not by direct refusal, that isn't their way—but by promising every day to send a man to take delivery, and taking care not to send him. It was no good Fleming sending the goods to his shop, for there would have been no responsible person there to take delivery—the whole staff would have gone out at the back the moment the trolley drew up at the door. Fleming sold the goods by auction, and Okisawa bought them all at a price far below the German price, because these shopkeepers who deal with European merchants have a compact among themselves never to bid against the man for whom the goods were originally ordered. And the worst feature of the whole thing is that the Japanese merchant cannot see that Okisawa did anything wrong in refusing to take the goods at the price at which he had agreed to pay. 'Okisawa

would have lost by it,' they said; 'and he is a poor man.'"

"Mr. Fleming could have brought an action," said Jevons, sententiously. "The Imperial Government has Courts which are open to the foreigner just as much as to the native; and they would have decided in his favour without doubt."

"That's all jolly fine, Jevons; but not being a practical man, you don't know where the screw is loose."

"I think I am right in saying that there is no foreigner who knows more about the Japanese and their intentions than I do."

"In general knowledge I am sure there is not," said Sandys, politely.

"That's a nasty one," chuckled Tiffany. "That's almost as bad as the man my wife was talking about."

"The man who knew nothing about everything?" asked Rich.

"Oh, I'm not going to be rude," said Tiffany, collapsing into fits of suppressed laughter.

"This happens to be a matter of experience," said Sandys. "I once brought an action of this kind against a Japanese, and it was not so very long ago. I got my case—the court was perfectly fair; but when it came to getting my money, I was informed that the debtor had removed his goods into another *ken*, and that I should have to bring the action in the *ken* where his property now was."

"What is a *ken*?" asked the First Secretary of the British Legation. "It's a jolly good word."

"A *ken* is a prefecture," answered Sandys, impatiently; and continued: "Murata, the Japanese lawyer I employed, a very decent Jap, a member of one of the Temples in London," he added, for the benefit of the irrepressible Tiffany, "advised me to drop it. When a Japanese took up that line of defence, he told me, it showed that he did not mean to pay, and that he would go on shifting his *ken* till the end of the chapter."

"'Out of my *ken*' has been given a fresh significance by the Japanese," said Jevons good-humouredly.

Like most other people, he was friendly with the Sandys.

"What would you have done, Sandys, if you had been in Fleming's place?" asked Rich, who spent much of his time when in Yokohama at the Sandys' house, because they were such near neighbours of Candida Begg.

"Well, last time this happened to me it was over an awfully nice lot of summer flannels. My Jap refused to take them for the same reason as Fleming's man—a cheaper consignment had been imported in the interval. He told me a very plausible story, and suggested that I should not lose anything if I sold them by auction. I said, 'All right, I will.' When the day came a lot of Japs turned up to 'make face' and to see their countrymen outwit me, but not to make *bonâ fide* bids I felt quite sure. The proceedings commenced. The auctioneer described the goods. Then he announced that there was a reserve on them, the reserve being the original price. He asked the room for bids—there were no bids. But the grunts of the angry merchants were as good as a play."

"That's all very fine, old man," cried Tiffany, "but what did you do with the bally flannels?"

"That's the point of it. The auctioneer then announced that Cock-eye, a Chinaman in Water Street, was willing to take the whole of the goods at the reserve price. There was almost a riot, though nobody was willing to bid."

"And was Cock-eye willing?" asked Tiffany incredulously.

"Perfectly. The Japs don't err on the side of liberality in fixing a price, and it happened to suit Cock-eye to get a nice lot of flannels, because an American squadron had come in."

"Might I ask how you—ahem—opened up negotiations with Mr.—Cock-eye did you say his name was?" asked the Dean, who took an interest in all sorts of things which you would not have expected to touch him.

"His name isn't Cock-eye," said Jevons. "No Chinaman ever does trade under his own name in

foreign settlements—the words over their shops mean ‘good bargain’ or ‘Heavenly kindness,’ or something of the sort.”

“But what about Cock-eye, Sandys? I want to know,” said Rich. “I shall go to Cock-eye for the future instead of Poole.”

“Well, I told my compradore to go round the various Chinese tailors until he found one who would take the consignment. I don’t suppose he told Cock-eye anything about the Jap—he just said that Sandys-San had a splendid lot of flannels to sell at such a price, and the very first Chinaman he struck saw what a good bargain it was.”

“Hear, hear, hear!” cried Rich, hammering the table provided by the Mikado for the use of the Japanese nobles. “What a blasted sell!”

“They are not all as bad as that,” protested Jevons.

“I think the worst feature about Japanese tradesmen,” I said, “is the way they adulterate and forge labels. Every day I see fresh examples.”

“I can’t agree with you altogether,” said Jevons. “It would be different if foreigners bought the Japanese imitations as genuine. When they ask for Lea and Perrin’s Worcester Sauce, they know what they want as well as what they are asking the tradesman to sell them. A Japanese poison instead of that restorative would, I grant you, be injurious to the health, as well as a deliberate fraud, but, in practice, the Japanese do not as a rule sell these things to foreigners. I think I may say that they do not rely upon foreign custom at all. The Japanese customer, on the other hand, only takes Worcester Sauce because it is an expensive luxury popular with foreigners. He buys it for swagger and for luxury, and as his tastes are so different from ours, probably likes the imitation retailed to him as ‘Lea and Herring’s’ or ‘Flea and Perrin’s’ better than he would like the real thing.”

“That’s all very well, Mr. Jevons,” said the Dean, “but it hardly reinstates the morality of the Japanese trader—I think we shall be agreed upon that point, at any rate, Mr. Sandys,” he added with a smile.

There was more than met the eye of the stranger in

this. Residents in Japan were aware that the Dean by no means shared the Bishop's opinions in the matter of refusing to marry Sandys to his second wife.

Sandys smiled back his understanding.

"Yet there is something to be said for them if you come to think of it," protested Jevons.

"I can't see how you make it out," said the Tudor-Rose, who took a very stern view of his employers.

"Well," explained Jevons; "the Japanese do not need Worcester Sauce. Such a poor country has no business to spend money on such things, and if you substitute the word whiskey for Worcester Sauce it makes my case much stronger. The real Worcester Sauce and the real whiskey are British manufactures on which, under the present inadequate treaty, the Imperial Government are only allowed to levy a beggarly five per cent. The imitation Worcester Sauce, on the other hand, is a purely Japanese manufacture—all the money which is paid for that is spent in the country on a national industry."

This spacious pleading restored good humour. It sounded like sarcasm, but Jevons meant most of it; he was quite clever enough to know that you can often maintain an argument cynically with much more chance of success than you can seriously.

How typical it all was! We had assembled there to discuss the affairs of Empires, at any rate, the British and Japanese Empires, and the conversation had, as usual, dwindled to a discussion of Japanese trade delinquencies because one Yokohama man was there, and he the most moderate and well-spoken of them all.

We were beginning to bore ourselves, as the French say, when I noticed a change in Bradwardine.

Bradwardine's face did not, as a rule, express much more than his conversation. His attitude now arrested my attention. For he was no longer lying back with half-closed eyes, thinking out some naval problem of tactics or construction on which he had to lecture to ready listeners. He had no trouble with his classes—even without that clockwork naval discipline, they were all eagerness to pick up any crumb of

knowledge which fell from this fighting F.R.S.

He had suddenly stiffened up; he was on the alert. Very shortly after, without a word, he rose and left us. We went on talking; we were so busy with the affairs of nations, for which some of us might have done a good deal more. Presently Rich said:

"What's that shindy?"

"What shindy?" asked Jevons incredulously, but turned white while he was saying it.

"I dunno—some row," answered Rich carelessly.

"It's a Revolution," cried Jevons. "Something that foolish girl wrote in that false dispatch has roused the righteous wrath of the Japanese."

"Righteous fiddlesticks!"

The naval man came in again perfectly cool. "Did you hear that row, Bradwardine?" asked Jevons anxiously. I don't think he was a coward, but he was a man of nerves.

"Yes," he answered as quietly as if it was a matter of no importance. "It's some sort of riot; a lot of *Soshi* and students. They seem to be marching on this place. There's nothing much else for them to do in this quarter."

Further discussion was stopped by an uproar outside the Club door, which the porter had barred in good time.

For the moment I was interested in watching the various expressions on the faces of the little knot of Europeans gathered in the verandah. The only two who showed any signs of perturbation were Jevons and Finch, who was an effeminate person. The two divines bore the test well. Tudor-Rose looked a bit anxious, but determined not to disgrace himself. Rich and Tiffany did not look as if anything was happening. Bradwardine looked like a quarter-deck Sphinx as usual, and Sandys as if he was the man in command about to issue his instructions.

Jevons was the first to break the silence. "I wonder if there are any Japanese in the Club," he said. "They might do something."

"At any rate they might tell us what it is all about," said Sandys.

Jevons made a dive from the room, and returned in a moment or two with an old Japanese Marquis who had been one of the principal *Daimio* of the old feudal days. He used the Club more than any other Japanese, and spoke excellent English. He was, of course, as calm as an idol. Without saying a word he rang the bell and asked some questions of the servant, but in a short staccato way which was not usual with him. When he had dismissed the servant, he said:

"It's a riot against the English—I think they mean all foreigners."

"What will happen, your Excellency?" asked Jevons.

"Nothing, if you stay here—this building was given by the Emperor—they will not dare to do it any violence."

I think that both Rich and Tiffany, who were not in the least impressed by the rioting, were rather struck by the fact that, even when rioting, the Japanese held anything that had been given by the Emperor sacred.

"You may be delayed a little, gentlemen, but presently the police will hear them and disperse them." The Club had no telephone.

There was a brain-wave between Rich and myself. We bounded up at the identical moment. We had both thought of Miss Palafox—left alone at the Legation with her precious uncle. "Chiquita!" was on my lips.

"Cheekie!" he cried, and we made a bolt for the hall, where our hats and sticks were. The porter, for our own good, refused to let us out. We were safe inside, and might be knocked about or killed when we got out. Rich pushed him aside and began to undo the bolts.

I dragged him off. "It's hardly fair on the other chaps," I said, "and there's a window in the library. We could drop from it—it isn't twelve feet from the ground."

"Bother the other chaps," said Rich. "Let me go; she may get scared out of her life while we are talking."

"Besides, we shall get there much quicker by the

window instead of having to fight our way right through them. They will have to come after us and attack us."

"Right you are!" He was a man of action and saw the point. We were out of the window and on our way in two minutes, but we were not going to have a walk over. They saw us in a twinkling, and a body of them, uttering blood-curdling yells, rushed to cut off our retreat.

Fortunately the Japanese don't carry sticks, and it was rather dark for stone-throwing; but it was wonderful how they came on at us. They were like wild cats; and it was no more a laughing matter for them than for us, for we were both big men, and Rich had won the middle weight boxing championship of the Army. As they were so light and had no idea of guarding, the first few who came at us went down like skittles. But we were not going to get off. In a minute or two we each had half a dozen Japs hanging on to us, beating us with their fists, tearing the clothes off our backs, scratching, kicking. If they hadn't got in each other's way they might have killed us; but they were all so anxious to get at us. I was too excited to reflect then that we could probably have got right off if we had started full speed. But Rich would never have taken to his heels from any Jap; for the moment his fighting instinct rather obliterated the object of our sally. Never till then had I quite realised what a magnificent specimen of English manhood he was, with that terrible right arm and utter oblivion of safety.

We kept up a sort of running fight to make our way to the Legation. Sometimes we shook our assailants off for a moment and made good way, but they always came on again. And we were getting very tired by this and bleeding like pigs.

Then I saw a fresh body approaching, and felt that it was all up. On came our new assailants. We called on each other for a spurt, which we knew must be about the last. Our assailants stopped and called on the others, who stopped also. Then almost miraculously one of the new party came towards me--

a disreputable piece of butcher's meat almost naked—and took off his shiny-rimmed German cap with punctilious politeness. He was one of my class, and a further glance showed that the rest of the new lot were also from my class.

I was surprised that I had made such an impression on them, but I took what the gods gave us, and after a few minutes' conversation to thank them for their timely interference, we pursued our way to the Legation.

I wish I had taken that conversation down while it was fresh in my memory—it was so naïve, so pompous, so full of the “unfortunate mistake” vein, so burdened down with Japanese “humilifics.” For once, “vile, worthless ruffians,” and so on, seemed incontestably true.

When we got to the Legation we found everything absolutely quiet. We had, in fact, some difficulty in getting there; so well was it cordoned with Japanese police, who did not think that two such awful-looking objects were fit persons to be admitted to the Legation, till one of the local police came on the scene and recognised Rich.

It was rather an unheroic ending to a night of action to leave the Legation without anybody belonging to it knowing how hard we had fought to get there—even to the peril of our lives. In one minute we became merely two foreigners who had been in a row; and had to get *rikshas* as quickly as possible to go and make ourselves decent.

As we lived in opposite directions, we had not even the satisfaction of talking it over when we had changed.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN I went to the Dai Gakku, I had fresh evidence of the extraordinary character of the Japanese. Battered faces among the members of other classes proved how largely the Dai Gakku had been concerned in the riot. Far from showing me any ill-will on that account, my own students evinced an increased cordiality—they were pleased apparently that their master was a fighting man, and the fact of what their schoolmates had suffered did not seem to create any ill-feeling. Even the victims took it in good part, I was told, which showed what a sporting lot the Japs were.

From my class, too, I learnt the wording of Chiquita's dispatch, which had exercised the very opposite effect to what I should have prophesied.

I felt sure that if Mrs. Tiffany had seen Chiquita's forgery she would have cried: "This'll bring these swaggering little Japs to their senses! Those *Soshi* will stop their agitation pretty quick—they'll think Treaty Revision a jolly good thing, and wish they may get it on any terms whatever."

She would have been mightily wrong; the one feeling when the contents of the false dispatch were circulated among them was a sense of blind rage against every Power except Russia. A grand lantern procession had been parading in front of the Russian Legation while they were trying to kill us, which must have mystified the usually well-informed representative of the Tsar considerably.

I felt in a very awkward position. I was rather a hero in the Dai Gakku, and I had to go on allowing them to be deceived. It was not for me to tell them the dispatch was forged, and yet there were quite heroic aspects in the attitude they had taken.

For the moment, when I got back to my house my mind ceased to be agitated in this direction, because

there was a note from Chiquita asking me to go and see her—as usual, at tea-time, which suited me best, as my work for the day was then over.

It was still very hot when I got to the Legation, and the lattices of the Legation drawing-room were closed to keep out the light and heat as much as possible. So Miss Palafox, who was alone, did not notice the cuts and bruises on my face. She was in one of her very nice moods. She handed me an envelope.

“It contains,” she said, “a cheque for two dozen lessons.”

My pride rose in my gorge. I was springing up from my seat when she disarmed me.

“Wait a minute till I have finished. There is no reason why you should open the envelope till all the lessons are over—it is only a chaperone. As I have no chaperone, I have to be careful!”

She saw me smile.

“If you think my carefulness takes curious forms,” she said, “principally the form of being rude, and I suppose it does—you see, I don’t bother myself to think before I act, and then I go too far and have to pull myself up with a jerk.”

“Now,” I thought, “she is going to say the words which will wipe it all out. She will quote that insult as an instance.”

But she did not do so in so many words.

“I really want to learn Japanese, but if I take several Japanese lessons a week from you without paying for them, people won’t believe me—they will think that the lessons are an excuse, that the whole thing is a flirtation. I know that you would gladly give me the lessons for nothing, but the only way that I can convince my little world that they are *bonâ fide* is to pay for them.”

“Well,” if you put it like that,” I conceded, “it is different.” But I registered a vow that I would never present the cheque. I meant to keep it as a memento.

It had not occurred to her to contemplate my not presenting it. I was afraid to think of this, for she

had a queer sort of clairvoyant power, and I knew that we should have words later on if I did not present it. The only thing I could not do was to prevent her making it known that she was paying for the lessons, and this, of course, she would do, in some clever way, as the payment was to be her chaperone. I felt that she meant to do it in some graceful way, for she was in her most sympathetic mood during tea and the talk that followed.

We had plenty to talk about. This second anti-English outrage following so soon on the first had set the whole English Colony ringing.

"Were you at the Rokumei-kwan last night"—residents always spoke of the Nobles' Club by its Japanese name—"when the rioters attacked it?"

"They didn't exactly attack it, did they?"

"Weren't you there?"

"Yes, but there had been no attack when I left, though there was a pretty rough mob outside."

"I thought they were attacked. Mr. Jevons was very much alarmed, and he made out, quite politely, of course, that I had been the cause of it."

"There may have been an attack after I left," I said, cautiously.

"Didn't they annoy you when you passed them?"

"We didn't go out that way—the porter wouldn't open the door. We left by a window at the back."

"Who was 'we'?"

"Rich and I."

"Why did the others not leave with you?"

"The Marquis Nabeshima advised people to stay where they were until the police noticed the rioters and drove them away. You see, the building is sacred—it was given by the Emperor."

"How like Mr. Rich! He is one of those people who are always dying to break their necks for the fun of it." She ended the speech with a little sigh, in which there was a distinct note of admiration, and got up to throw the lattices open and let in the sunset breeze, which had sprung up, to cool the room. Her injuries were quite cured. When she turned round, she saw the cuts and bruises on my face for the first time.

"Why, you were in the riot!" she cried, "and of course that precious Mr. Rich was with you. Well, you are a couple! I suppose you did it for the fun of the thing!" she asked, more than half admiringly.

"No, I am afraid it was a little too serious for that."

"What possible object could you have in doing it then?"

"Well, we wanted to know if—the Legation was all right."

Want of perception was not one of Miss Palafox's faults.

"You were frightened about me!" she cried.

I nodded.

With Southern impulsiveness she threw her arms round me and kissed the cuts and bruises, and the moment afterwards took away half the effect by saying:

"Now don't be a goose; it's gratitude, not the other thing. But it was ripping of you both. I hate England often, but you Englishmen do things which—there, I can't finish it; you know what I mean!"

It was not love, she had told me that with uncompromising plainness, but it was a bond which bound me to her in the face of unnumbered provocations, one of the hardest of which was the doubt if her impulses were ever wholly sincere.

CHAPTER IX

THAT shoulder to shoulder fight with the mob that Rich and I had done together brought us closer than we had been since we left school. He volunteered one afternoon to take me over to tea at Yokohama with Candida Begg, who was evidently what he would call a great "pal" of his, though she was about ten years older than he was. I had rather a curiosity to see the famous Miss Begg, of whom Yokohama was so proud, and it also gave me the opportunity of seeing one of the show-places in Yokohama, Netheravon, where the Sandys' lived, for her bungalow was in the Netheravon Garden. It was, in fact, the bungalow built by Sandys' father-in-law for his elder daughter and Sandys to occupy on their return from their honeymoon-trip to England, but never used by them. Miss Begg was a bosom friend of the second Mrs. Sandys, his deceased wife's sister, who had dared public opinion and made *A Japanese Marriage* with him when the Anglican Bishop refused to allow them to be married by the Church. They had been stronger than the Bishop, and were the most respected, as well as the most popular, people in the community.

Miss Begg was the daughter of a sort of partner of Mrs. Sandys' father. She was very grateful, as she lived by herself, to have the chaperonage and protection of her bungalow being in their compound. Netheravon was at the far end of the Bluff at Yokohama, the flat-topped volcanic hill on which most of the English residents lived, as it was much higher ground than anywhere else in "treaty limits."

It was a novel experience, too, for me. Though I had been three years in Japan, I had never been inside a house on the Bluff. The English merchants of Yokohama saw hardly anything of the Legation people, who regarded them as a nuisance, or of the professors and others in Japanese employ whom they

despised as hirelings of the enemy. This was not, I understood, the attitude of the Sandys', but though they did not share the prejudices of their fellows, they kept pretty much to the set.

We rattled up from the railway station in our *rikshas*, stopping at the foot of the Bluff to let extra runners with ropes hook on to our shafts, to haul us up the hill. It was quite a long ride before we drew up outside a long red fence with a finely-carved and fantastic gateway which the late Mr. Avon had bought from an abandoned Buddhist temple. We dismounted at the gate, and passed through the covered way which had led to the Hondo of the same temple, to a noble English residence and a low bungalow of the ordinary type used by British residents in the Far East, with a broad verandah smothered in roses.

Miss Begg came out into the verandah to meet us. I could never have believed that she was, as Chiquita protested, thirty-four. You would have said that she was not more than twenty-four till you noticed that she had an ease and an air which no unmarried woman of four-and-twenty would be likely to attain. Though she had black hair, she gave you the impression of fairness from the pink skin and dark blue eyes, and her undying girlishness may have been partly due to the slightly *retroussé* cast of the beautiful features and partly to the slender elegance of the figure and the charming poise of her back. She was so remarkably pretty that her friends did not mind teasing her by saying that she ought to have her photographs taken back-view. She might just as well, for a handsomer back I never saw.

The blueness of her eyes and the freshness of her skin made you expect delightful teeth, and you were glad not to be disappointed. Her frank laugh was the greatest of all her charms.

Rich was not a marrying man, he had told me before, and he was particular to tell me so again, I suppose lest I should fancy that he was engaged to Miss Begg.

"I just like her awfully," he said. "It's such a comfort that she means to be an old maid."

"I don't see why," I said, "if she is so pretty."

"That's because no one wants to marry you."

"No, nobody does."

"You are lucky, old man. Now my life is made a burden to me because my uncle has made up his mind that I shall marry my cousin."

I knew that Sir Cornwallis, the worthy or unworthy baronet to whose honours Rich would in due course succeed, had set his heart on his nephew's marrying the daughter whose sex had been the chief disappointment of his life, and that if Rich married anybody else his allowance would cease, and he would be cut out of his uncle's will. It was rather natural on the part of his uncle to want his daughter to bear the family title, and twenty thousand pounds a year was not to be sneezed at.

"I don't care about this rotten Service," he said, referring to Her Britannic Majesty's Diplomatic Corps. "I just took on the job because they would persecute me so if I was in London."

"If it is not rude, Rich, why don't you marry your cousin? Is she so very awful?"

"Awful. A red-faced flapper, with a lot of freckles and a pigtail, who calls me 'Cousin Randolph,' and shows a sort of proprietary interest in me as if I were part of the furniture of Richborough."

"Is Richborough the name of the place that you are so anxious not to have?"

"It isn't that I don't want to have Richborough; it has hunting and shooting, and I could do a bit of racing; but it's that girl. She's such a young heifer—she's at the floppy sentimental age. Some chaps would lump it and marry her, but I can't—I know I should be such a beast to her. She'd bore me so. Fancy settling down at Richborough as a prize husband!"

It was certainly worth while his telling me that he was so confirmed a bachelor and Candida an inflexible old maid. For people so situated they seemed to enjoy a very complete understanding. They were evidently delighted to see each other. When she was laughing and flying about with him, I simply could not believe that she was thirty-four—surely it was a "two" and

not a "three." She must be twenty-four, and Chiquita a malicious slanderer.

But in her gladness to see Rich she did not forget her duties as hostess.

"Go and see if you can find any of the Sandys', Dick, while I show Mr. Page their possessions."

The nick-name Dick, which no one else used, and which wasn't taken from his Christian name, was so very indicative of the degree of intimacy. He called her Candida. It is so much easier for the man to use the woman's real Christian name than it is for the woman to reciprocate.

The Sandys' had certainly a superb place. Philip would rather the house had been built like a Japanese nobleman's house of the old régime, but as it had been Bryn's home since her childhood he did not like changing it, and left it what rich Melbourne people call a cottage—a cottage with a ball-room and billiard-room, and enough bedrooms to take a good slice out of an acre. Having only one storey is what constitutes a cottage in Melbourne. Immediately in front of the house were its tennis lawns in the centre of a beautiful stretch of English turf studded with groups of rare palms and yuccas.

But this was not the part of the garden over which Miss Begg, who had the run of it as tenant of the bungalow, cared to linger. She led me on to the marvellous Oriental pleasance, into which Latimer Avon had poured the sympathetic side of his nature.

A shallow crater had been converted into an exquisite lake, whose slopes, dug into innumerable little bays, were wooded to the water's edge with carefully-trimmed maples—pink, copper, white and variegated, and the queer Japanese fir-trees trained to resemble the native gardeners' *repertoire* of fancy subjects. Between them little stone causeways led over hog's-back bridges to the islands with which the lake was studded, each bridged to each and piled with votive lanterns, pagodas, shrines and torii till they gave the effect of a gigantic willow-pattern plate. At one end of the lake was a mass of the fantastic rock-work in which the Japanese and Chinese delight. The dragon,

whose forequarters protruded from a cavern in this maze and whose hindquarters did not exist, cost, Miss Begg told me, a fortune for a Japanese.

At the end of this rock-maze rose a splendid tea-house of Chinese blackwood copied from the celebrated mandarin tea-house at Shanghai, and the scene of a dramatic episode in the second Mrs. Sandys' life. The lake excited my admiration. Never had I seen a willow-pattern plate reproduced in such perfection in the Chinese gardens of Japan. Everything was in the most classic style of the Japanese landscape gardener, from the noble fir-tree on one of the islands trained into the shape of a peacock with its tail spread out, which had been transferred as it stood from the garden of a *Daimio's* palace, at a huge cost, to the wistaria arbour built out over the lake, whose tassels of blossoms, four or five feet long, swept the surface of the water.

And one of the prettiest features in the whole garden was the little stream six feet wide and six inches deep, which, after a winding course of a few hundred yards, spanned by numerous bridges and haunted by six-tailed goldfish, protected by a weir, fell over a waterfall six feet high into the pellucid waters of the lake at the point commanded by the wistaria arbour, which was used for fishing, as the lake was well filled with carp and other fish prized by the Japanese angler.

Beyond the lake a long slope of about an acre, covered with splendid blossoming thickets of the wild scarlet azalea, whose blossoms attracted the glossy black butterflies as large as humming-birds, carried us up to the artificial Fujiyama, which was no more than a tall mound, with a path winding round it, like the famous pasteboard Fujiyama in the grounds of the Asakusa Temple. It had a few trees on the top for shade, and a stone seat for people to rest on while they took in the view of the matchless snow-mantled shoulders of the real Fuji, towering twelve thousand feet into the air, a dozen leagues away, and the blue Hakone mountains, and the junk-dotted gulf of Tokyo with the million-peopled city at its head.

"I come here most evenings at sunset when I am

not engaged," she said. "Sunset is the time to see Fuji."

When we got back from our tour of inspection, we found Mrs. Sandys and her charming golden-haired children in Miss Begg's drawing-room with Rich. For a man who had such a horror of marriage he was the picture of domesticity with one of her jolly little boys on each of his knees, and the girl, who was two or three years older, pulling the little curls of blue and green and yellow wool out of his rough light Irish tweed coat, in which there seemed no reason for their existence.

Mrs. Sandys was laughing as heartily as a child over some absurdity of Rich's—she was one of those women whose nobility strikes you even before their loveliness. She was much younger than Candida, and really had more influence over Rich than anybody in Japan in the direction of laughing him out of his absurdities. I could not make out whether she was laughing at him or with him for the moment. I fancy it was by this uncertainty that she exercised her power. In any case, her influence over him was of the best.

"What a lovely garden you have, Mrs. Sandys!"

"Yes, I think it is," she said simply. "At all events, it is very lovely to me. I have lived in it all my life except during the unhappy time which I should like to cut out with a pair of scissors and throw into the sea. It was my poor father's creation."

Other people had told me this, and had uncharitably added that there was a romantic touch in Latimer Avon which had partly shown itself in the creation of this exquisite garden and the collection of the lovely curios which made the house so unique, and partly in making him a title-hunting bounder. The daughter was singularly free from affectation. She received me with great kindness, breaking the ice by saying how sorry she and her husband were not to have seen more of the English who were teaching in Tokyo. And it was impossible to doubt the sincerity of anything she said.

Miss Begg's house was arranged with a happy

audacity and soundness of taste. The first thing that struck you when you entered it was that she must be just moving in. Her drawing-room was almost as bare as a Japanese room, and some Japanese houses do have polished wooden floors. Then you felt a sensation of agreeable relief. The walls, which had hardly anything hanging on them, were covered with perfectly plain but really costly paper, of what the Japanese call night-blue. There was a superlative cabinet of old lacquer which contained the whole apparatus of a Buddhist shrine and a very few other rare pieces; and there was sitting accommodation for only about half a dozen persons.

I understood that a few rugs were permitted on the floor in the winter. The room seemed to have been arranged with a view to dusting—you could have seen a speck.

The same spirit was reflected in her dress, so simple, but distinguished by its admirable cut, and the way it was put on. Miss Begg might have looked severe if it had not been for her frank, contagious laugh.

Mrs. Sandys was laughing at my surprise. "It's a pity you can't see Miss Begg's bedroom," she said.

"But he can," said Candida. "You can show it to him."

All three children hung upon their pretty young mama when she took me to the bedroom. Here simplicity was carried to a still greater extreme. Its pale-coloured walls, it is true, were surrounded for about two feet from the ground with a representation of a hayfield studded with wild flowers, either printed from wood-blocks or painted by Japanese. But the room was almost devoid of furniture, except the beautiful little bed, the whitest thing the human mind could conceive. The one speck of colour about it was a fine copy of Diana and her nymphs, after one of the great eighteenth century Frenchmen, which formed the foot of the bed; not on the side facing the room, but on the side facing its occupant.

The only other things in the room were an exquisite white dressing-table, with a chair on each side of it, in the same Louis Quinze style, standing in the window.

If she looked in any other direction, Miss Begg might have been in a hayfield as she lay in bed. For everything else was concealed in cupboards.

After this Mrs. Sandys, with the children still hanging on her, carried me off to look at their curios.

My position in the employ of the Japanese Government had given me a very deep interest in Japanese art, especially as applied to house-interiors and the articles in domestic use, and after three years of constantly meeting Japanese and understanding their language, I was beginning to know something about the subject. The friends of my pupils were aware that the way to give me gratification was to initiate me in the knowledge of things Japanese. Mrs. Sandys asked me if I should like to see her husband's collection, and Miss Begg told me not to refuse such a good offer. I felt that she must be dying for me to accept the offer, which might well have been made with a view of giving her half an hour with Rich, though I was confident that the invitation was sincere. But her manner was perfect; there was not a trace of suggestion in it.

I was, of course, glad to accept, and still gladder the moment I entered that sumptuous house. The atmosphere of home reigned supreme, while we were surrounded with pieces which would have made museums envious, and many of which I had not seen equalled in the collections of native connoisseurs. One cannot transmit the charm of such a collection in words—it seemed almost sacrilegious to have them used in the decoration of a house. I wondered if those sturdy little golden-haired boys of hers had derived from their Japanese birthplace the Japanese child's immunity from the desire to break. The little girl, who she said was her step-daughter, was a gentle creature, and apparently the most devoted of the three.

We did not look into things. "I don't want you to think me a fool," said Mrs. Sandys, "but though I love all these beautiful things and do know something about them, I should tell you all sorts of rubbish if I tried to play showman. Come over here whenever you have two or three free days—we shall be delighted

to give you a bed, and my husband will enjoy cataloguing them to you, which is just what I could not do."

She rang the bell. "It's time for the children to take their tea."

I had noticed that they did not take anything at Miss Begg's. Their tea was their evening meal, far too important to be trifled with. When she had given the order, she took me to the wistaria arbour—there is nothing more deliciously scented in spring.

While we were there we saw Rich and Miss Begg seated on one of the islands. Mrs. Sandys looked at me hard, to determine, I suppose, how far she should take me into her confidence. Evidently she was reassured, for she said:

"I am rather anxious about this. Is it coming to anything?"

It certainly did not look much like it—at one minute he was laughing boisterously; at another he was breaking off bits of the moss, which made these little stone islands so adorable, to throw at the six-tailed goldfish and frighten them. Evidently Mrs. Sandys divined my thoughts, for she commented on Rich's unlover-like attitude, and she observed with a smile:

"It does not mean anything with a man like him—that sort of man doesn't fall in love like an ordinary being; the utmost he can do is to find a woman whose society does not bore him, and who likes him well enough to excuse his want of perception. Accident has to do the rest."

We watched them for a little.

"He is as irresponsible as a faun," she said, "and as happy as one; that's one thing in his favour." And a little later on she said: "I wonder if you have been misunderstanding me, Mr. Page. My anxiety is not that the marriage should take place, but that it should not take place. I can see quite well that Candida is very fond of him, and I should say that he likes her immensely in his way; but she is ten years older, and she has so much more brains than he has. They might be very unhappy if she began to bore him; then he would be such an awful bore."

"But surely Rich is as good as engaged, if he

ever marries at all. His uncle will cut him off with a shilling if he marries anybody but his cousin."

"He must have a little money of his own unless his father died insolvent; and he has his profession, and Candida has about six hundred a year. It doesn't make much, I know, for a man like him; but it is quite enough for him to marry on if he fell violently in love."

I did not repeat to Mrs. Sandys the conversation which I had had with Rich on our way over from Tokyo that very afternoon. For one thing the conversation was private; and for another it might have been a clumsy expedient of Rich's to throw dust in my eyes. He was not very clever.

"What sort of a girl is she, Mrs. Sandys?" I asked; and as soon as the words were out of my mouth I saw that the question sounded rather delicate, and hastened to explain—"I mean, what sort of tastes has she?"

"It's her tastes which make me anxious. A girl with money of her own and as good-looking and charming as Candida could have married a dozen times. The reason she has not married is that none of the men who have asked her have been interesting enough. She has practically been her own mistress since she was a girl. The aunt who lived with her till she came of age was a negative sort of person, who did little more than keep house. Candida could not stand being chaperoned, but though she was very frank and ready to make friends, she had no taste for silly flirtations; so she could be allowed to do what she liked. She is a wonderfully all-round girl in her interests. She is a great reader, takes quite an intelligent interest in things Japanese, and is extremely good at sports, especially tennis and riding. The sport is the most hopeful sign about the situation—that's their common ground; but I'm afraid that her reading and gardening, which make such a large part of her day, would bore Mr. Rich horribly. And such a nice wholesome woman deserves something better."

"What fools we mortals be," I thought. "Here's a woman her own mistress, untroubled with money

cares, living almost in the family of charming people; she is devoted to gardening, and shares one of the most beautiful gardens in the world; she has a deep friendship with books—and will quite likely throw all this over if it enters Rich's addled pate to ask her to marry him. And I, who am casting stones at her, would like nothing better than to share my life with a mischievous little monkey like Chiquita Palafox!"

CHAPTER X

A PROUD man was Orlando Jevons. The dispatch which Lord Clapham had received from the British Foreign Office authorised the British Legation in Tokyo to concede the Revision of the Treaty so long and so earnestly desired by Japan. Jevons justly felt that it was his doing. Lord Clapham was not the kind of man to take the initiative; he was the kind of man to take kicks. The conviction that the demands of the Japanese were just and the agitation that they should be conceded had been inspired by Jevons.

Every Englishman in Japan whose opinion was worth having, regarded the concession as fatal, but Jevons was sure that Japan was a nation whose naval and military power entitled her to demand the revision of the treaties, and was sure that she was sufficiently civilised not to abuse them.

He had twisted Lord Clapham round his little finger, people thought, and the result was that for better or for worse Great Britain acknowledged the independence of Japan.

That the other nations would follow was a matter of course. Great Britain's power and interest in the country outweighed that of all the other nations put together. The enthusiasm of what Jevons delighted to quote as "the Imperial Government" and its supporters knew no bounds. Processions were the order of the day; the illuminations made the British Legation look as if it were being besieged; but there was the usual hair in the soup — the attitude of the *Soshi*. These riotous and evil-minded persons (of very tender years for politicians) proceeded to make furious attacks on the Government, raking up the old grievance that foreign merchants, in return for submission to Japanese rule, were to be allowed to settle and trade anywhere in Japan.

National bankruptcy was to be the consequence.

This made the Government very anxious about another matter in connection with the *Soshi*—the punishment of the burglars who were concerned in the attack on the British Legation and the rioters who had besieged the Rokumei-kwan and half killed Rich and myself.

The Japanese Government has more moral courage than most Governments; it cannot be accused of truckling to Demos; but it was justly anxious that the Treaty Revision, for which prominent politicians had lost their lives, should be hailed with a chorus of welcome and not be a bone of contention.

The British Legation had not yet formulated its demands for compensation, moral or otherwise. The Japanese Foreign Minister paid a very special visit to beg as a favour that it should minimise the incident. Jevons, who acted as interpreter, was in complete sympathy.

But the *Soshi* were more obdurate. Instead of being penitent, they were defiant; their attitude threatened to wreck everything. The British Legation was once more consulted, to throw light on what had happened to make the *Soshi* so difficult.

Jevons failed. If a man is seldom a prophet in his own country, still seldomer is he a prophet in a foreign country, for which he sacrifices the interests of his own, as pro-Boer members of the British Parliament were to learn before many years were passed. The *Soshi*, it appeared, had nothing but contempt for Jevons, and were as little disposed to be appeased as if they had been the victims and not the aggressors.

How Chiquita Palafox arrived at her knowledge of the situation I cannot say, unless one is permitted to suppose that when Lord Clapham had not Jevons to make up his mind for him he fell back on his spirited and opinionated little niece.

All I know for certain is that when I got back to my house from the Dai Gakku one afternoon, I saw a *riksha* with two runners—not a very ordinary sight in Tokyo—at the door, and, going in, found a certain young lady, very pretty and puzzled.

"I wish I had never tried to save the old treaty," she said, as soon as she had given me an exquisitely-gloved hand. Gloves may seem a small matter for me to have noticed, but they are far from being unimportant at the beginning of the rainy season in Japan, when they have to be kept in bottles or sealed tins.

"Miss Palafox, that is not worthy of you."

"Please never use that word again, Mr. Page; it is one of those words like *right* and *wrong* which are pure conventions, pure assumptions, pure assertions on the part of the speaker."

I made no reply. I felt rather at sea. Had she come for the pleasure of rhetorical exercises?

I gave her lessons in Japanese four times a week, and when she felt more inclined to talk we did no lessons. Why had she come? She was, at any rate, direct if not lucid, for the very next thing she said was:

"You've got to get me out of this—you are my best friend."

This was very clever of her. Throwing herself on my mercy, as it were, made me ready to shed my heart's blood, figuratively at any rate.

"Well, what am I to do?"

"Squash, or win over, the *Soshi*."

"This is exactly what the Japanese Government for years past would have liked to do, and I am only a paid employee in a Japanese school."

"Is that all?"

"I am afraid so."

"Men are so dull. What was it you were telling me yesterday after our lesson?"

"I don't think I told you anything of importance; I was just laughing over the absurdity of the situation at the Dai Gakku on the day that I arrived there covered with scratches and bruises, and saw the boys in the other classes to whom Rich and I had given black eyes."

"It was your own boys—the boys in your own class—you told me who saved you."

"Yes, it was."

"Now don't you see any way out of it?"

"No, I confess I don't."

"Well, I do. You have told me more than once of the extraordinary keenness of the Japanese sense of the ridiculous."

"Yes."

"Well, you have got to take your boys—your class—into your confidence."

I smiled feebly. "It is not so easy as it sounds to take a Japanese into your confidence."

"You have got to tell them how clever Palafox-San is, how she heard of their intentions, and tricked them."

I simply listened to her. She appeared to have a scheme formulated in her head.

"Say that she detected them while they were planning to steal the Treaty, as the British Minister had refused to show it to them; and since he refused to believe that such an outrage on a Legation could be contemplated, determined to save the Treaty by a ruse. . . ." She handed me a copy of what she had written. I glanced my eye over its denunciations and its wild tirade about the great Powers not intending to put up with Japanese arrogance any longer, and all of them except Russia, being on the point of signing a treaty between themselves to arrange their future relations with Japan on a far stricter basis, to be supported if necessary with a naval demonstration. I read it through.

"How could you pen such a document as this, Miss Palafox? Did you want to frighten them?"

"No," she replied, with a little toss of her head. "I just wanted to give them a jolly good sell by writing the exact opposite to what was really in the Treaty."

"Well, what am I to do, Miss Palafox?"

"The Dai Gakku youths—they were in it or they would not have been with the people who attacked the Rokumei-kwan. They may not have taken any part in the burglary. Probably not! I think they must have been professionals to break into the Legation and tie me up without anyone hearing a breath. The ordinary Japanese cannot keep his breath

quiet. But your students were in with the *Soshi* in the riots."

"Yes," I said, in a tone which showed her I had not yet caught her drift.

"You can work your class," she said triumphantly, as if there was no question about it.

"What am I to do or say?"

"Tell them that they were very clever, but not so clever as a woman—that she guessed their plans and made a false treaty on purpose to deceive them. Tell them that she left it on her bed for them to find, and threw the real treaty behind her bed; and tell them that she is so pleased at saving the Treaty by her wits that she will not allow her uncle, the British Minister, to demand their punishment."

"I am afraid the 'Imperial Government,' as Jevons calls them, will see to that without any demanding."

"Well then, tell them that the British Minister will request the Imperial Government that no more notice should be taken of the matter."

I must own that I felt doubtful as to how the Dai Gakku would receive my mission, knowing the estimation in which the Japanese hold women. There was the chance that they would be angrier than ever to think that their united wits were not equal to those of a mere girl. The Japanese hates being made a fool of anyhow, unless he is in the mood for it. Otherwise, her proposition struck me as very tactful. The country was in a great state of tension; the British had conceded the country's demands; it was not, therefore, desirable that its gratitude should be poisoned by resentment at wholesale punishments.

On the whole the best way to manage things seemed to be to consult my favourite pupil, Mayeda-San, a very bright boy, who was always my guide in my rambles about Tokyo, because he liked to take the opportunity of learning English. I asked him to lunch with me. It was a half day. I was going to take him to one of the hotels, but he suggested that we should go to a large foreign restaurant near the Nihombashi.

I was so curious to see what the restaurant was like

that I agreed at once, for the Nihombashi is in the heart of old Tokyo, in a quarter where half the population live in sampans, little boats with hoods, in a net-work of canals—a water life, half Venice and half Canton. It was outside Treaty limits, so it could not possibly be kept by foreigners. Mayeda spoke of it as being very large, but on the average not one foreigner a day went near the Nihombashi.

Outside it was a hideous building, like you get in the poor parts of Paris. Inside there were two or three floors all arranged exactly alike, with little round iron café tables and Austrian bent-wood chairs. The glass and cutlery were rather poor, and the whole thing reminded you of a cheap French restaurant. The waiters were inexpressibly funny in dress-clothes, which fitted as loosely as *kimonos*. The thing which struck me most was that every customer in the place was Japanese, and that nearly all of them wore European or pseudo-European clothes. Frock coats and furry top-hats were very popular; and the men were otherwise a superior lot.

"I thought you said that this was a foreigners' restaurant, Mayeda-San?"

"It is," he said.

"But there is not a foreigner in the place!"

"Foreigners' restaurant for Japanese," he explained. "Government have built—if not practise here, Japanese no can eat dinners when to England have gone."

"Do you mean to tell me, Mayeda-San, that the Japanese Government built this place for the Japanese to learn how to eat in a foreign way?"

"*Yoroshi*."

Seeing how surprised I was, he added: "For Japanese not easy to sit—look see."

I had been rather shy of watching them, but when I looked it was very hard not to laugh, for at nearly every table was someone hanging on to a chair with his knees doubled back under it till his heels almost touched the seat of his chair from below. They were, in fact, kneeling in their accustomed posture with the seat of the chair inserted between their heels and their hams.

Mayeda-San pointed out to me all sorts of important people, whom I knew by name; it was when they were high up in the Government Service that they began to educate themselves for taking meals with Europeans without making *faux pas*. That Government officials always wore European dress, I knew; perhaps for the same reason.

I tried to picture Lord Salisbury squatting on his heels in a *kimono* on a yellow mat with the conscientiousness of the Japanese, trying to teach himself to eat rice with chopsticks; but my mind was not equal to it, though his nephew, a future Prime Minister, could have done the *kimono* part pretty reasonably.

We took *table d'hôte* lunch, because I was anxious to see what they would give us; but the whole thing was so successfully English that it is not worth describing. Besides, I was rather disconcerted by finding myself with every eye in the room on me, and have understood the feelings of the Prince of Wales from that time forward.

When, however, I realised that I was fulfilling my familiar rôle of teaching Japanese, I became more at ease. I really did know the proper way for an English gentleman to eat, so there was no reason why I should be disconcerted by finding myself a model. I suspected that the very fine dish of asparagus, which did not appear on the *menu* (written in English as well as Japanese for every table) was added in order that the guests might have a lesson in the management of this revolutionary vegetable. And I noticed a dozen or more knives being divorced from peas during the progress of that meal, which failed in its prime object of affording me an opportunity of confiding my very delicate and private political mission. So I ordered up a fresh bottle of beer — everybody was drinking bottled beer (made in Japan on the American plan and trade-marked with a big dragon)—and confided to the hugely honoured Mayeda that I had something very private to talk to him about, and asked where we should go to have the conversation.

"Nice place?" asked Mayeda.

"Yes."

“Go Gwai-Rio-Bai.”

This meant the Garden of the Sleeping Dragon. I knew the place well; it was an orchard of delightful old plum trees, so gnarled and prostrate that they reminded the Japanese of the mystical *kirin*, the beast which adorned the bottles of beer we had been drinking.

“Japanese go Gwai-Rio-Bai when want talk poems.”

I supposed from this that I should have been paying him an extra high compliment if I had gone somewhere to talk poetry to him. I let him cherish the illusion till we were seated on one of the tea-house benches in that garden of mossy turf and lichenous trees. The same bench does for natives and foreigners; the natives squat on it or sit on it side-saddle. Before we had time to sit down we were saluted by a string of little *moosms*—human butterflies with scarlet under-garments peeping between their pale blue *kimonos*, and with their tiny feet, looking almost like pigeons' feet in their split-toed, dazzling clean *tabi*. The *obis* they showed as they bent their foreheads to the ground, with turned-in knees and respectful hisses, were scarlet too, and they had bright flowers in their glossy black hair, moulded, with camellia oil, into butterfly wings. They brought the honourable tea in five little cups without handles on carved wooden saucers. I was accustomed by this time to the delicate colour and delicate flavour of the tea of Japan; but I did not touch the salted cherry-blossoms, or, perhaps, they were salted plum-blossoms here. Mayeda looked astonished; but I did not want salt—though it were the salt of the earth—in my tea.

He wished, after tea, to take me round the orchard, examining poems which had been written by his friends among the hundreds pinned to the poor old trees.

His partner in poetry, he told me, was a travelling photographer, who had written the best poems there. I asked with careful politeness how he knew they were the best.

He told me that his friend had taken the Government prize for handwriting, quite as if the handwriting were the most important part of poetry! Perhaps it ought to be.

He did unpin one of his partner's poems for me to look at. A delicate little water-colour drawing was washed in at the top; it showed the first tinge of dawn stealing up over the horizon of the low-shored bay of Tokyo. The poem underneath, with its vertical line of the picturesque Japanese letters, executed with a very fine brush and perfectly exquisite handwork, was as beautiful as a maiden-hair fern. One could tolerate the most absolute bosh in handwriting like that—the whole thing was not bigger than a post-card, and the literal translation was, "Dust of light at the back of Ocean,"—the Japanese poet's way of expressing dawn.

Threatened with this deluge of genius I came to the point at once; and it was fortunate that I had my three years' experience of the Japanese, for Mayeda showed how thrillingly interested he was by replying in grunts instead of staccato English.

The Japanese are a cautious race as well as secretive in a matter of any moment. It was not to be expected that he would give an opinion all at once; but if it had been utterly impossible he would have laughed the Japanese laugh which is such an evil thing to hear. The Japanese laughs when he is going to tell you about a death, and he laughs when he means to quarrel. He was so interested, too, in what I told him, that he forgot to show me any more poems pinned to plum-trees. Hardly a word did he say all the time I was talking to him, except:

"Pity English lady not like Japanese woman—Japanese woman not do these things."

"Miss Palafox is not English," I said; "she is Spanish."

"Spanish, English, American, German, Russian," he said,—"*all white man English.*"

I think he must have been surprised by the vehemence with which I explained that I was not apologising—that if it had not been for Miss Palafox's heroism, instead of the whole matter ending in a joke, the Government would have had to pass sentences of great severity on the men who broke into the British Legation.

Mayeda knew without my telling him how vindictive these sentences might have been in the flush of the Imperial Government's satisfaction at the all-powerful Great Britain setting the example of recognising Japanese independence.

All he said when I had finished was :

"Others must talk to."

I did not fancy that he himself was mixed up in it; he was not a revolutionary-looking person — he never wore a hat or lie-European shoes.

CHAPTER XI

THE students and *Soshi* must have had some central organisation capable of discussing a situation and issuing its orders at very short notice, for when I entered the Dai Gakku the next morning, I found Mayeda waiting to tell me that he could give me my reply at the close of school. I knew from his face that it was an affirmative of some kind, and when he spoke in greater detail later on, I was interested and amused to find the impression which Chiquita Palafox had made on these young men. They did not, of course, think her good-looking; judged by Japanese ideas her type was not correct; she had not the thin eagle nose, the lantern jaws, the pale face, or the elongated neck, which are their standards of aristocratic beauty. But they admired her courage and sense of humour and resourcefulness, and were grateful to her for her generosity. She would receive a written testimonial of their gratitude. They were not rich, or the testimonial would have taken a more solid form. This was the substance of what he was deputed to tell me.

A few days later I had a note from her saying that she had received a whole bundle of Japanese writing, and would I come and explain it to her. When I went I found her with an armful of neat little slips of rice-paper, many of them with charming pictures, and all of them beautifully written. A moment's glance after my experiences of the Gwai-Rio-Bai told me that they were poems. Such of the rioters, at any rate, as could write poetry had sent her a poem. It did not signify that she could not read a word of them; they were works of art, probably more than they were works of literature, and so she was full of a project for having them all splendidly mounted in

an album with an account of the occurrences which had led up to them—which I was to write.

There was a great variety of them crediting her with all manner of qualities from *out-witting* expressed by "A Rat scampered over the Sleeper's face," to *generosity* instead of *vindictiveness* expressed by "Instead of the Thorn the Rose's scented Petals."

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The next I saw of Chiquita was at Yokohama. Having a short holiday, I had taken the Sandys at their word, and invited myself to visit them.

I had mentioned my intention to her while she was showing me the poems, and she made no allusion to any intention of proceeding to Yokohama. I was a good deal surprised when she arrived a few hours after myself, to stay with Miss Begg, whose bungalow was in the Sandys' grounds, the more so as Miss Begg was Mrs. Tiffany's friend, and Chiquita, as a rule, left the Tiffanys and their friends severely alone. I found the connecting link later, when I learned that Rich was in Yokohama, staying at the United Club. It was he who had brought them together; he had taken Miss Begg to the Legation, and Chiquita had fallen in love with her.

Chiquita was no fool. She recognised that Miss Begg was an unusually wholesome-natured woman, and she had been pining for such a companion of her own sex.

I am not exaggerating when I say that Mrs. Tiffany was the most agreeable European woman Chiquita could have had for a friend in Tokyo. She, at any rate, was not a humbug, and was capable of honest likes and dislikes. It was a pity they could not be friends, because they would have amused each other with their sharp tongues and wits. But Chiquita went further than her little-England uncle, and the Honourable Mrs. Tiffany was the leader of the set who sighed for an hour of Sir Harry Parkes to right the state of affairs at the British Legation. Mrs. Tudor-Rose was a silly snob, occupied with family pretensions in

an out-of-the-way corner like Japan. Mrs. Macy, the wife of the Nonconformist Minister who was chaplain to the American Legation, was a woman who never stopped talking about things which did not interest Chiquita.

Rich, therefore, gave her the greatest treat she had had since she came to Japan, by bringing Candida to see her. Chiquita poured out her heart to her; she admired her looks, her figure, her clothes, extravagantly, and invited her to the Legation so much while she was staying with the Tiffanys that Miss Begg asked her to visit her at Yokohama.

Tiffany had been quite a traitor to his camp while this violent friendship was being born; he really enjoyed Chiquita's society very much, and none the less for the hard knocks she gave him for his wife in her conversation. He took it so good-naturedly that Chiquita reciprocated his good will.

There was every chance of their becoming quite great friends, because she rather liked the atmosphere of "rotting," as he called it, which was best suited to his brains. A capacity to giggle and indifference to time were, I feared, passports to her favour; and I possessed neither of them.

The upshot of it all was that Chiquita was staying with Miss Begg, while I was staying with the Sandys; and my heart gave a little leap when it became clear to me that she had timed her visit at Yokohama to coincide with mine. Both girls and Rich were dining at the Sandys the first night I was there, and it was then I learned that Rich was staying at the Club.

For people who had such a magnificent place, the Sandys were not formal. Many English conventions they thought did not acclimatise well in Japan. For one thing, except when they were giving a dinner-party, they did not let dinner monopolise the evening. Men and women left the table together, and occupied themselves as they chose. That night Rich went off with the ladies, while I had a delightful evening with Mr. Sandys among his noble curios, discussing their points and deciphering signatures. In the morning Mr. Sandys went away early to his office, and Mrs.

Sandys told me that I was to consider my time entirely my own. Japanese servants are admirable in many ways, but not as nurses; and even with Chinese *amahs* she had to keep a constant eye on her little step-daughter Mary, and Phil and Rummy (whose proper name was Romney); so I strolled about the garden and was not long in discovering two charming apparitions in the light bright fabrics that suit that lotus climate.

Chiquita was hanging on Candida, and they were waiting, and likely to wait a good round time, for Rich, who took getting up seriously. Perhaps Candida had something to do about her house; at any rate, I heard her say: "There's Mr. Page!" And when we had been conversing for a few minutes, I found that she had left us.

I pictured to myself a delightful morning spent with Chiquita in dawdling about that earthly paradise, the Sandys' garden. Under ordinary circumstances, killing time is much more painful to me than to Time, whom I can only call the "enemy" for being in such a hurry. But I told myself that I was having a holiday and that it would be good for me to try to do absolutely nothing, at which, as a rule, Chiquita had proved such an efficient helpmeet. If she had asked for a hook and a line to catch the Sandys' six-tailed goldfish, I should have been much less surprised than by her almost pettish exclamation, "I want to go into Yokohama, Mr. Page. Will you take me? Candida insists on waiting for Mr. Rich!"

The Sandys lived at the very end of the Bluff, more than a mile outside the town, though it was within Treaty limits.

"I shall be delighted. Shall I order the *rikshas*?"

She replied with a smile which illuminated her whole face.

"If it is not a rude question, why were you so anxious to start, Miss Palafox?" I asked.

"Because I'm homesick; I'm dying to be among Christian men and women."

As I knew that she was a Roman Catholic, and nearly all the foreigners in Yokohama were Protestants,

I took this to mean *white people*. Her religion did not sit heavily on her.

I was right, for the next thing she said was:

"How lovely it is to be with a crowd of Europeans you don't know. I know every European man, woman and child in Tokyo by heart. I know everything they wear down to the creases and stains. I watch the gowns fading under the hot sun and the shoes losing their shape. I wish I had gone to the Club Hotel now, and made Candida stay with me there so as not to lose a minute of it. We're rather far out at Netheravon."

"What do you want to do first, Miss Palafox?" I asked, as the extra *kurumayas* hooked themselves on to steady our *rikshas*, which showed that we were just at the end of the Bluff where it dipped down to join the town.

"I want to mix with the stream of globe-trotters and do just what they do. I want to be with them and feel that I'm one. I'm going with Candida to her Chinese dressmaker presently; she's going to meet me in town."

"Where?"

"Oh, we didn't fix — you can't get away from people in Japan."

As we passed the Club Hotel, the verandah was full of foreigners, laughing and talking at the tops of their voices, with the excitement of being in Japan. What a contrast to the *blasée* Chiquita! Some of them were combating the heat with iced lemon-squashes.

The sight fired Chiquita.

"Matè! Matè!" (Stop, stop!) she cried to her *riksha* boy. My boy stopped in sympathy. "We'll go and sit there too, and have squashes!"

I ordered iced Bass for myself, and we sat down. Chiquita listened with avidity to the plans of young men in immaculate flannels, with dark blue bird's-eye silk puggarees folded to a hair round their broad-brimmed grey *terai* hats; and of young women in smart muslins and surahs with every variety of Japanese fans except good ones.

You would have fancied that they had all come away

from home without their handkerchiefs from the number of times that the name Shobey turned up.

"We'll go to Shobey's," said Chiquita decisively, "when we've done our squashes."

It was only a few minutes' ride up Water Street, but Chiquita enjoyed bowling along the Bund in her *riksha*—not to notice the junks on the bay and the quaint Japanese life of the Hatobas which give æsthetic foreigners so much pleasure. She liked passing as many as she could of the other kind of foreigners, shouting and giggling at the novelty of riding in *rikshas*.

The shop of Shobey (who does not arrange himself and his goods on the floor, but has counters and chairs like a European) was crammed. The first thing a foreigner does on his first *riksha* drive is to procure a Japanese wife or silk handkerchiefs. Fate rules him—Fate in the shape of his *riksha* boy, who gets his best commission from the people who deal in these commodities. If a man has a lady with him they artfully direct his eyes to the wonderful bargains in handkerchiefs in the windows of Shobey, who, in his eagerness to capture European custom, used to label his goods "Crosse and Blackwell." If a man is alone, no matter what he asks for, it will be construed into a delicate way of expressing one particular desire.

At Shobey's I found that Chiquita was no fool about shopping; she did not buy the rubbish other foreigners were buying. She bought quite expensive things and knew their proper value, for she was paying for them by weight. The Japanese buys his silk as he buys his rice, by his comically-named equivalents to pounds and ounces. The American ladies in the shop were so tickled at her buying her black silk stockings by the pound that they plunged into the conversation, and did all their purchasing over again by weight. She eluded being drawn into bargaining for them with the ease of an eel. I smiled to myself as the astute Shobey proved to them that by weight their purchases came to far more money. Instead of having to take anything off what they had paid, he left them convinced that he had been giving them absurdly good

bargains, because he had omitted to weigh them. In any case, he was so cheap that they bought as much of his shop as they felt that they would be able to smuggle-in on their return to the United States.

From Shobey's we drove to the curio-shops of the Benten Dori. It was only because the other foreigners were all going there; Chiquita had not the collector's instinct in the slightest degree. I am not sure that she would have kept the poems sent her by the students if they had not looked like Christmas cards.

Her fancy took this turn because I was an ardent curio collector, as far as my means allowed, and though the Benten Dori, which means Venus Street, is full of rubbish especially collected for foreigners, there are always good small pieces to be found there. I really thought that Chiquita was reforming, she took such an apparent interest; but I am afraid that her attack was only temporary—the animation of the bargaining carried her away.

Presently Rich and Candida came right into where we were.

"Hullo, Cheekie!—you caught it too?"

Chiquita was in too good a humour to be annoyed at the liberty he was taking with her name. She ignored him and turned to ask Candida:

"How did you find us?"

"We just told our *riksha* boys to take us to you. They exchanged grunts with the people all the way along, but they didn't once stop to look, so I suppose your nicknames fit you well."

She was, of course, alluding to the habit which the Japanese lower classes share with savages of describing a stranger by a nickname based on characteristics which cannot be mistaken. A man with a nose like the great Duke of Wellington would be called "Eagle"; a man with a falsetto voice, "Sparrow." I was wondering whether Rich, in his spotless flannels, would fight shy of the curio-shop, with its filthy old things, as a woman draws in her skirts from merely moral contamination. I almost wished he had, for he behaved so badly. He was tickled to death by the kind of things which formed the man's stock-in-trade. He

caught up quite valuable articles, of which the use was not obvious to him, so roughly.

"What's this blessed thing?"

He gave such roars of laughter as he pulled the things about, that it was quite obvious that he had never had the curiosity to go in a curiosity shop since he had come to Japan.

He went on till Candida simply took him by the shoulders and forced him out, though the proprietor did not seem to mind; he evidently did a large business with globe-trotters and was accustomed to the manners of barbarians.

Knowing that Candida had come to take Chiquita to her Chinese dressmaker, I asked Rich where he was going.

"With them," he said, in his laconic style. I looked for Chiquita to demur, but evidently, as the dressmaker was a man, she thought there could be no harm. Besides, it gave her the opportunity of saying that she had a low opinion of Mr. Rich, but did not think him worse than a Chinaman.

I was rather glad. I had no particular desire to spend the rest of the morning in playing billiards with Rich at the Club, and I don't suppose I could have got away from him in a hurry.

We drove almost to the beginning of the Bluff to a house on the Creek.

"This isn't a dress-builder's, Candida," cried Rich; "it is a boat-builder's!"

It was certainly surrounded with the appliances for making and repairing the sculling boats used by the young Englishmen in the settlement. In the midst of them there was a rickety narrow outside staircase.

"It's all right," she said; "he lives up there, and when you have seen him you will know that the staircase is safe." (Rich was making a grimace at its ricketiness.)

We tramped up it headed by her, Rich calling out: "You keep off the companion, Page, till I'm on deck," as I began to step up just behind him. When we got in we were confronted with the biggest and fattest Chinaman I ever saw. Mr. Rutland Barrington's mountainous Marquis was nothing to him. It

was Ching-Lee, attired in a rich Chinese dress made like padded pyjamas; the coat was of apple-green silk, the trousers of delicate mauve satin, lapped and tied round his ankles as if he was going on a bicycle, though no bicycle could possibly have borne him. He wore flesh-coloured socks of fine silk, and very small brocaded satin slippers with soft soles about an inch thick; and he kept a round black cap, with a coral button on the top, upon his head all the time.

The nails on his beautifully-kept hands projected at least an inch beyond his fingers. When he commenced measuring Chiquita, and his huge talons rested on her thin blouse as he held the tape, Rich called out: "Now then, Cheekie, your last hour's come! He's a cannibal—he's going to tear you to pieces with those tiger claws!"

We should have blushed for him if Ching-Lee's dignity had not been equal to this occasion.

"No hurtee littlee Missie. Bad man no havee longee nails—blakee."

"He's telling you, Dick," said Candida, drawing him aside to reprove him, "that long nails are a sign of a respectable and peaceful life—otherwise they would break—but you'll have to go away if you can't be good!"

"All right," he said; "I'll promise—I was sorry the moment I said it. I forgot that the old buffer spoke English."

Then the business proceeded. It really was an extraordinary spectacle to see that enormous Chinaman's talons passing backwards and forwards over Chiquita. His face was so inscrutable that he might have been the greatest villain on earth under that bland smile; and his remarks on her figure were killing. They were not made in the nature of remarks, but as stage directions for the building of the dress. She was small and had the figure of a fairy.

After he had taken her measure, he produced various rolls of fine white Chinese silk, far superior to the Japanese, and when Chiquita had selected one and enquired the price, he produced a sort of spoon-shaped wooden spectacle case, out of which he took scales

delicate enough for an apothecary or a jeweller, consisting of a white ivory rod, fine green silk cords, and one little brass plate. On this he balanced the heavy roll of silk with the precision of a conjurer, held it up in the air for a moment, glanced at the index, and said: "Silkee five dollar, makee thlee dollar, no extola."

I could see that Chiquita was astonished at the lowness of the estimate; for the dollar, the Japanese yen, even then was not worth more than three shillings; but she kept her face turned away from Ching-Lee. Though she was very extravagant in some ways, she had the thrift of the Latin races strong in her too. I could see that if Ching-Lee turned her out as satisfactorily as he did Candida, who was the most elegant woman wherever she went, he would pay a good many visits to the British Legation at Tokyo.

At the same time, it seemed incredible that a woman turned out like Candida should have every dress produced in that attic above the boat-builder's, where the whole stock-in-trade consisted of a dozen rolls of silk tied up in a large handkerchief, and a pile of fashion papers from ten to twenty years old. This great fat man had apparently no one to help him, and of himself had seemingly no ideas, for when Candida told him that Chiquita was Spanish, he turned over the pile and showed her a fashion plate from which he had made a dress for some Spanish woman in 1888, and seemed quite certain that she would want the same in 1894.

"I say, Candida," began Rich.

"Yes, Dick."

"Do you mean to tell me that this old buffer turns out your whole kit?"

"Not my hat or my boots."

"No, I mean all your dresses."

"Yes, I do."

"Well, how does he manage it?"

"Because Bryn Sandys is such an angel."

"What's she got to do with it?"

"Don't you see? She's awfully well-off, and gets all her frocks, except her summer things, out from home; and she lets me have them copied."

"Is that so very generous of her? I should feel a bit sick if there was no other man with clothes like me."

"Oh, you goose! Women are different—what we pay for is to be unique. Not one woman in a thousand would hand over her new things almost before she has worn them for another woman to get all the value out of them."

"What is he copying now?" I asked. There did not seem to be anything in the room except the rolls of silk and the old *Qucens* and *Modes Illustrées*.

"Oh, he's going to have a dress of mine which he has just made; he will come and fetch it."

"In a pocket-handkerchief?"

"In a sort of glorified pocket-handkerchief—they never crush things."

At lunch I said to Mrs. Sandys: "I have been hearing great accounts of your good nature this morning. Miss Begg was saying that you are the best-natured woman in the world."

"That is what Mr. Rich would call a large order. I'm sure it was very nice of her. Did she let out why?"

"It was at Ching-Lee's."

"Oh, I know; she always makes such a fuss because I let the old Chinaman copy a frock of mine when she wishes it."

"Miss Begg puts it more strongly than that—she says that you let her copy your very best frocks the moment you get them."

"She only tells half the truth, which some divine observed, I believe, was worse than a lie. She didn't tell you about all the long evenings she wastes up at our house devising those frocks with me. They are her creations—it is not such an easy matter to order a dress that you will like from the other side of the world; and there's another thing that she did not tell you—that a dress that comes out this distance nearly always has something not quite right about its fit."

"No, she did not tell me that."

"That was not the point; the point is, whose clever

fingers and good taste make the frocks just what they ought to be instead of just missing it."

I did not pursue the point further; I saw that each of these two generous and charming women intended to remain in the other's debt.

No one could have called Mrs. Sandys a match-maker, but being only something and twenty herself, the wife of a husband who idolized her, and the mother of cherubs, she had a great idea of giving young people a chance. I don't know which of the quartette she specially wished to be guardian angel to, but she observed that without me Rich and Chiquita and Candida would be three, and made it clear that I was to go off with them. I think she must have divined how I appreciated the society of the exquisite Chiquita, who was the kind of girl that any man would choose for a *tête-à-tête*; she was so radiantly pretty and so *chic*, the mistress of many moods.

I knew that it was very young of me to want to pick up the crumbs that fell from Chiquita's table instead of enjoying the contemplation of womanly perfection like that of Mrs. Sandys, Chiquita's superior in beauty and elegance as well as in intelligence and charm of disposition—in fact, in everything except in that one point of witchery.

There was, of course, this further point: that Mrs. Sandys dwelt upon cool, unobtainable heights, from which she could afford to shed her graciousness, while, though it would have been madness on my part to aspire to the hand of Chiquita, there was no blank wall of impossibility between us—she was, at any rate, not married to any one else. Indeed, if I could have attached importance to the warmth with which Chiquita occasionally greeted me, I might have flattered myself that there was no impossibility at all. I did not flatter myself; I was not sure even of her sincerity.

Chiquita wanted to go to the theatre, the Japanese theatre. Long as she had been in Japan, she had never felt the desire before, and it was only due now, I was convinced, to her having heard that it was one of the things which the globe-trotters did. Rich had never been to one either, and had not the slightest

desire to, but the one thing he had learnt in his Grenadier days was to take a hand in anything which was going, if he liked the society he was in.

Candida, speaking Japanese, had of course been to see Japanese plays constantly, and she said that Europeans had begun going to the Meiji theatre because there was quite a rival to Danjuro, named Watanabe, there.

When we got to the theatre, I could see at once that they were accustomed to foreigners, for there was no attempt to make us take our boots off and leave them on the doorstep in exchange for a fat wooden ticket several inches long, and we were asked if we would have chairs in our box the moment we were inside the door, for which we were charged, as we were for keeping our boots on.

It was rather a hazardous proceeding. The boxes, being intended for kneeling-in, were not wide enough for sitting-in on chairs without your knees pressing against the front, and as the front was only made of deal, the thickness of a packing case, nailed on, big men like myself and Rich nearly pressed it off every time we bent forward. I found the play absolutely stupid; it was the usual Japanese drama. Its themes were a girl selling herself into prostitution to relieve the necessities of her parents, and her lover going through wonderful adventures in innumerable disguises. There was, of course, no real love-interest in it: Japanese plays do not deal with a man's love for his betrothed or his wife, but his love for his father and mother. Self-sacrifice is their key-note—it appeals to a Japanese audience.

“I should like to see a Japanese play founded on a parent's love for his children,” said Candida; “it would be such a refreshing novelty. I have seen so many of the other kind.”

I don't think that the orchestra in a wooden cage on one side of the stage were any worse than usual, but the tum-tumming of the drums and the caterwauling of the other instruments sounded just awful in that small theatre.

“What an infernal shindy,” cried Rich, starting

forward. "Let me get at them!" He very nearly did, for they were on our side of the stage, and the front of our box gave a most ominous crack.

"Compose yourself, Dick, or I can't take you out again," said Candida, with the air with which gracious women belie their words.

The play was as bad as the music. In the course of the play the lover, for some stratagem, became an old, old man, and this *rôle* was so popular that it seemed to go on for an hour. His representation of bald-headed, palsied old age was certainly marvellous, but he had the stage almost entirely to himself, and to those who had not the ghost of a notion what it was all about, the performance became intolerably wearisome. Rich grew more and more furious.

"Can't anybody make that confounded old monkey shut up?" he cried. "Where is the man with the blanket? What are they doing with that diving-bell?" The blanket and the diving-bell had been used to enable this leading man to change his character on the stage in earlier scenes. There was no response to his furious appeal. Instead of that, attendants, with candles stuck in the ends of long bamboos, came forward and held them in front of the actor's face, where the audience were to look for expression.

The silliness, as he called it, of this restored Rich's good humour; and then Chiquita took him in hand. Sooth to say she had been enjoying herself immensely. I had by this time taught her a good deal of Japanese—languages came as naturally to her as mimicking to a monkey—so she had the advantage of Rich; but she did not, I think, make any attempt to follow the play. That was not the part which amused her. She was developing a wild interest in the people. To her the adaptability with which the Japanese sets about the common round, the trivial task, was a humorous performance. She never got tired of watching this burlesque, and she had suddenly discovered that the theatre was one of the best places for observing the never-flagging comedy of Japanese life. It was that and not the dull tragedy on the stage which was engaging her attention.

Rich's impatience disturbed her; he was getting restless again, when she laid her hand on his arm in her confiding way and pointed out a baby, which, finding its parents' attention taken off by a thrilling piece in the play, had seized the opportunity of crawling along the tops of the partitions which divide the pit into nests of plebeian families. It had crawled on to the stage, and was in innocent enjoyment of the knife which the hero was to find at his hand when the time came to commit the murder.

From that time forward both Rich and she were perfectly happy. They watched the family-parties in the nests, fathers and mothers and babies, making their tea or eating repulsive delicacies derived from the offal of the sea. They watched the hawkers who came in to purvey to the wants of the audience, and walk about on the tops of the partitions, which its actors also used when they needed distance for some effect. Rich grew so absorbed in the comedy off the stage that he never even noticed when a suddenly wheeling round of the entire stage replaced the old man's monologue with a battle-field of warriors, whose blood gushed out like fountains.

I drew his attention to it, and asked him if he remembered what we had learnt in form. "It's just like the ancient Greek *Eccyclema*, isn't it?" I said, maliciously, of course.

"It's just like that ballet at the Empire," he said; "you know the name—Orpheus and something or other."

"What's the time, Dick?" asked Candida. In Japanese plays, unless you are a Japanese, you don't wait till the play is over, though their duration is now limited by law to nine hours. They used to go on all day.

"By Jove!" he cried, "they have collared my watch. That was that grubby little beast who knocked against me so suddenly, and you wouldn't let me kick him." Then he burst out laughing, and it was about five minutes before we could get in a word.

"You seem very pleased at the loss of your watch,"

said Chiquita. "I should swear, and you're not generally backward in that."

"Oh, you don't know the fun of it all," he said.

"It wasn't my watch at all!"

"Where is your own watch?" she asked.

"At the bottom of the sea."

"What?"

"I dropped it overboard while I was fishing."

"On purpose?"

"No fear."

"Well, how did you do it then?"

"In bending overboard to grip the big fish that was going to get off the hook. I got the fish, but my watch shot out of my pocket and sank. I could see it shining ever so deep as it went down."

"It's just like you not to wear a chain," said Chiquita.

"It wasn't really; I always rather kicked at it, but it was a fad of the junior officers when I was in the Grenadiers."

"But what's all this got to do with the joke?" persisted Chiquita.

"Well, I'll tell you. The very day I lost it I happened to mention it to Frazar, who told me that a friend in America had sent him over a couple of marvellous watches as samples. They only cost three yen each, were guaranteed to go for a year, and were cased in the New Connecticut gold, which you cannot tell from the real article except by acids. He let me buy one, and I determined from that moment never to give more than three yen for a watch again. Now that dirty little Jap will think that he has made his fortune, and he'll sell it to another Jap, who will murder him when he finds out that it isn't gold. You'll excuse my being amused."

"Come home to tea," said Candida.

Outside the theatre was sitting a Japanese woman, the picture of patience. It was rather an unusual place, so Candida asked her if anything was the matter. "Very little, Honourable Lady," she answered. It was only that she had lost her clogs and would have to wait till everyone who had a ticket had

claimed theirs, a matter of five or six hours. She had no money to go back into the theatre. I asked how much the clogs were worth—it was only twelve sen, so I gave it her. She poured thanks on me, but she resumed her seat.

“She’ll wait for her clogs all the same,” said Candida. “She does not often get the chance of making a penny an hour!”

There is a patience of the poor which passes all understanding, like the peace of God.

CHAPTER XII

ALL the Sandys' servants were Japanese, and in the afternoon tea used to appear the moment you arrived, with the magic promptness of a Japanese tea-house. Not Japanese tea, though, but good, sustaining Chinese tea, with all sorts of delicious things to eat.

The fact that neither of the Sandys were there made not the slightest difference. Tea was evidently only waiting for our appearance.

Tea in that garden in a Japanese sunset with the woman you loved was something too exquisite. The burden of the heat of the day was over; there was only left a warmth as soft as the yellow light which blended the broad green lawns, the gay wistarias, the blue water of the lake, and the old grey stone of its shrines and bridges into one intoxicating draught of beauty. I had got out of the way of eating big teas—my tea was so often Japanese tea, as I passed some picturesque point in the expeditions to see the inexhaustible wonders of Tokyo, which I made directly I got out of the Dai Gakku in the afternoon. But the others were marvellous in their capacity for assimilating rich cakes and candies, and the numbers of cups of tea they could drink. Rich and Chiquita were just fine young animals, and Candida, whose digestion was as good as her figure, had an appetite as young as theirs. When their powers at length showed signs of slackening, Chiquita lured me away. She used no words, but as she rose showed me, as a pretty woman can, that I might follow. To me this was the crowning of the afternoon, even though I was haunted by the fear that the pretty act of grace was prompted by the desire to take Time by the forepaw, as she once said in one of her rare lapses of English. That Rich and

Candida, in the intoxicating sunset at the end of a long and rather dull afternoon, would drift off by themselves, was fairly certain. Chiquita had a certain vanity which would make her prefer to take me away from them rather than be left with me. I felt this, but found the invitation delightful.

I suppose Chiquita had thought of the interpretation which could be placed on it, and that her graciousness was to remove it. But in the pleasure of finding her ready to enjoy things with me, I soon forgot her motives and accepted the wise advice of Herrick, "Gather ye roses."

One always wasted time with Chiquita. She lived the absolutely idle life of the well-off woman of the Latin races. She had no desire to employ her mind, much less improve it. The day never dragged with her unless her doing nothing was interfered with. Her only real occupation in the day was dressing, and there I daresay the most careless effects were studied.

When you were with her, she expected you to watch the changes of her face, to notice the points about her costume.

"When you leave Spain," she had said to me, "and go with English people, you think you must be getting old, for you no longer hear the men say as you pass, 'How pretty!'"

Remembering this, I feasted my eyes on her, and talked to her about herself, as lovers love to do, till Candida, looking flushed and lovely, and Rich, I thought, looking a trifle guilty, hunted us up to make arrangements for the next day. Would we go to the Toshogu Temple? Rich and she were going to ride. As Chiquita had no habit with her, would I take her in *rikshas*; we should all be together.

Oh, Candida! with your clear soul, why did you tell that lie knowing what was in your heart, and knowing also the almost impossibility of making a *riksha* man keep abreast of anything; his habit being to follow in Indian file—his form of blinkers.

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When the horses came round the next morning, I saw Candida at her best. From her beautiful head, under its sensible *terai*, to her beautiful feet, she was groomed to perfection.

"By Jove! Candida," cried Rich enthusiastically, when he had given her a hand up, "I should like to have you in the Row at the most crowded minute in June to see if there was any woman who came up to you in figure with your habit on."

She answered with a frank smile of pleasure.

Then she mounted, and those two faultlessly turned-out people, so English except for their tropical head-gear, walked their horses to the gate, not for a canter in Rotten Row, but for an excursion to a hoary Buddhist temple, leaving us to catch them up in our *rikshas*, if we had the desire. There was an extra *riksha* with the lunch.

Mrs. Sandys saw us off smiling, and looked as if she would have enjoyed going with us, but did not wish to spoil our chances.

The riders were sometimes ahead of us, sometimes behind us; never with us except when one couple waited for the other to point out something.

Only a mile out of the town we climbed the hill of Kanagawa, to-day despised and rejected of Yokohama except for a tea-house, noted equally for the beauty of its garden and its view and its *moosmes*, to which the young Englishmen *riksha* out after their work on hot days. But Yokohama is in theory only a settlement for foreigners in the ancient city of Kanagawa, placed a mile out so that the hated foreigners should not intrude upon the exclusive inhabitants.

Rich voted that we should stop at this tea-house for the day; it seemed a good enough place, why should we go further? And he wanted to stop again when we came to the famous temple of Kawasaki, which had a most attractive plum garden full of nice little tea-houses. "One temple must be just as good as another," he said, "and I'm sure the accommodation won't be so good at the Toshogu if it's the deserted sort of place you make out."

This was his way of viewing Candida's glowing picture of the peacefulness and unalteredness of the Toshogu. He was rather interested, however, when our *riksha* boys pointed out the place where Mr. Richardson and the other three English were murdered by the *Samurai* of the Prince of Satsuma for not getting out of the way of his procession. He knew all about this. I was wondering why it had got fixed in his unintelligent mind when he exclaimed: "They did things better then, they sent a fleet and bombarded the place."

The spot the *riksha* boys pointed out was not far from Kanagawa.

I honestly think that both Rich and Chiquita were impressed with the Kawasaki Temple; they had apparently never thought of looking at a temple before, in all the time they had been in Japan, though the temples of Shiba, within a walk of the Legation, are among the finest in the East.

After Kawasaki the road grew more interesting to us, less interesting to them, for we had left the great high road called the Tokaido and struck into the country road, which led us past long stretches of rice-fields, rising in terraces to the top of the low volcanic bluffs, where little Japanese farmers, and more of their little wives, were turning the tiny runnels, which fed their crops, off or on with a piece of turf and a spade like a half-moon. All along the rice-fields were dear little scarlet shrines of Inari, the rice-goddess, guarded by her faithful stone foxes.

Rich thought they were fox-terriers and "beastly good."

"I don't like rice," he said, as we caught them up for a minute.

"Did you have to eat too much rice-pudding at school?" asked Chiquita.

"I don't mean to eat, I mean as a show—as a—landscape."

"Why?" laughed Candida.

"Because it has such a disastrous effect on the personal appearance."

This was true; it is often difficult to tell the sex of the ragged and filthy thing which stands knee-deep in mud and water, with its head nearly between its legs as it thins out or sets out the rice-plants. The rice-farmers are almost black with the weather-beating their faces get.

"A tea-garden's much more my style," he cried.

All three of us roared with laughter.

"Don't be silly," he said testily; "I don't mean a place where naughty little girls badger you to drink Japanese wash. I mean a place where they pick tea—like that."

He pointed to a long slope which had high fences of bamboo, covered with matting on the windy side, and looked like a nursery-garden filled with privet bushes.

On one edge of it was a line of little women with Cambridge blue towels arranged on their heads like sun-bonnets, little *moosmes*, with rosy faces, standing like Ruth amidst the alien corn, breast-high, in a glossy sea of green with busy tongues and fingers. The pale blue of their head-dresses fluttered in a little breeze as we sped past them.

I could only speak to Chiquita when we drew up. I do not know if the police have raised their resistless voice on the subject (the Japanese does not keep the law, he obeys the police); one thing is certain—that nothing will ever persuade two *riksha* boys to run side by side. One always follows in the tracks of the other, so close that I have seen a string of foreigners shot on to the backs of their *riksha* boys by the first having to stop dead. It was tantalising to see Candida and Rich riding as level as if their horses were harnessed to a carriage, with their faces turned towards each other all the time; Candida's white teeth gleaming in that frank laugh of hers, while Rich's great peals rang out through the stillness of that country road.

Soon we struck into an avenue of the solemn fashion that leads to historic temples in Japan, with low containing walls of hoary masonry, stained with lichens and moss, and an avenue of tall cryptomerias pointing

their spires to heaven. The walls of old Japan are specially beautiful, because they are low enough to reveal the beauties beyond them. In Japan a wall is not built to prevent people scaling it—it would take a very particular wall to effect that—they indicate that there is a boundary. And if the boundary ought to be observed, it is observed, though there is no jealous exclusion where the need does not exist.

From time to time we passed some evidence of the approaching sanctuary, such as a little red shrine, and sometimes over the low polygonal wall we could see waving fields of the millet which fills Japanese legend, studded with brilliant wild flowers.

Between a pair of noble *daimio* lanterns, made of chased bronze, and several feet high without their granite bases, Rich and Candida drew rein for us to come up to them. It was the beginning of a wide village street, lined on both sides with the booths which grow up round temples, but almost deserted.

At the end of the street stood one of the vast two-storied scarlet gates which the Buddhists call a *sammon*. We dismounted there, and the *betto*, who had run beside them all the way from Yokohama, took their horses from Candida and Rich. He seemed none the worse for his long run; and in any case, had not performed so severe a task as our four *riksha* boys. One takes an extra man outside the shafts for a journey like this. The Toshogu Temple lay a long way to the land-side of the Tokaido, in a part unfamiliar to me, though it is about equi-distant from Tokyo and Yokohama. Japan is full of glorious old temples, which you do not realise until some energetic friend makes you go to them, after which you begin at once to despise everybody who has not seen them.

A low stone wall surrounded the temple. Two more fine votive lanterns stood on each side of the causeway which led to the gate.

Hardly had we dismounted before little *moosmes*, all smiles and salaams, strove to direct our steps to the tea-house, which stood on an eminence outside the gate—a most inviting place.

"I vote we go there instead of the bally temple," cried Rich.

"Only for a few minutes," said Candida, giving the little girls their honourable tea-money, though she did not expect any of us to touch the pale uninteresting liquid in the five little cups. But I emptied two or three of them. I had got into the way of taking it as often as it was offered to me. I had done nearly all my excursions with natives.

"Isn't it horrid?" asked Chiquita, who had never tasted it.

"Muck," said Rich, dismissing it with one unsavoury word.

"Even I have never been able to cultivate a taste for it, though I was born in the country. But I often take it for politeness sake," said Candida.

"I think I'll try some," cried Chiquita, putting out her hand for a cup; but before she could take it the tray was politely whisked away and a fresh one brought with hotter tea—as hot as Japanese tea ever is.

"You'll poison yourself, Cheekie—it's almost as bad as that *sakè* stuff."

The faint, unsavoury flavour rather appealed to Chiquita's taste.

"I didn't bring you here to drink tea," expostulated Candida. "I brought you to look at the view of the Temple."

Even Rich thought the view was "rather ripping." It was like a hilly and beautifully wooded park with acres of cherry-blossom enfolded in solemn groves of cryptomeria, from which peeped a five-storey scarlet pagoda, and gloriously carved and gilded roofs; while at a dozen different elevations on the mountain-side glades showed exquisite sacred buildings, approached by stairways and terraces of mossy stone, as fantastic as a willow-pattern plate. The temple seemed to cover the whole mountain.

We entered the great gate and found ourselves in a vast avenue of stone lanterns given by the chief *Daimios* in honour of their Tokugawa lords. It ran through vast cherry orchards. Many of the trees were

quite forest trees of the kind with blossoms like a Bankshia rose, which is never asked to bear fruit. The sacred deer came up fearlessly to be fed, hardly to be distinguished from the bronze deer standing in the glades in the attitude of feeding. On each side of the path were stone channels of clear hurrying water, spanned at frequent intervals by tiny hog's-backed bridges of mossy stone.

Chiquita was making little exclamations of delight. She liked beautiful things, even the beauty of Nature, and she adored fantastic devices. Rich, too, must have been pleased, for he said it was *just the place for a Club*, which drew a little *moue* from Candida.

Under the trees between the rich green of the ancient turf and the living snow of the cherry-blossom we could see a line of vivid scarlet.

Rich was the first to notice it. "Hullo, what's that?" he cried.

"It's the wild azaleas, the deer-park, which we shall see presently, is full of them."

"We shan't be seeing things all the time, shall we?" asked Rich, in dismay.

"We shan't be sight-seeing them—we are going to have a picnic for the little man," she answered mockingly.

He did not feel quite reassured, but about half an hour later his face suddenly cleared up and he began to take the liveliest interest in everything. To do him justice, he did not often play the Achilles in his tent, though he had a blazing temper.

And the things we looked at first, exquisite as they were, were only the smaller fry of a temple, such as the Gakudo, the funny little hall of the offerings. There were no offerings there, only notice-boards, about a foot long and a few inches wide, hung in rows like the hats in a Club-hall, to record the benefactions to the temple.

Beside, it was a bell tower, which was not a tower at all, but a roof built over a gigantic bell hung a few inches from the ground, which was never rung, but struck with a beam like a Roman battering-ram.

Before Candida could stop him, Rich had drawn it back by the fine red tassel of cord which hung on its end. I half expected the holy men to rush at us and hustle us out of the temple, for Buddhist communities can be very aggressive, but they seemed to expect it of an irresponsible idiot like Rich. His punishment came in another form, and we shared it, for whenever that bell was rung it shook everything within a hundred yards of it, like the firing of a huge piece of ordnance.

Candida was visibly annoyed, for one of the priests in the temple was a friend of hers. The situation was saved by a vile pun.

"Is this a Gakudo, too?" Chiquita had asked, imagining, I suppose, that it was a kind of generic name for minor sacred buildings.

"No," I said; "this is the Shoro."

"Well, I'm jolly sure I shall never go near one again," cried Rich.

Candida was mollified, but contented herself with begging him in her pretty persuasive way not to touch any more things.

He was in a bad mood; he asked: "Because they are so touchy?"

"Precisely."

He promised to try and remember, and the next minute his mind was taken up with the lustration pool of the temple, a cistern of grey granite, which looked like the sarcophagus of an ancient king transformed by magic into a huge block of ice by the water, which welled up from the centre and poured over every side of it in one unbroken sheet. This, too, was shaded by a noble and fantastic roof, whose upturned beams were adorned with superb carvings.

"What's its Japanese name?" asked Chiquita, who was taking a great interest in everything.

"That's the Chozubachi."

"And what's that?" she asked, pointing to a red wooden tower, which looked like a gigantic chess king.

"That's the Koro—the drum-tower."

"What's the good of it?" asked Rich. "It does

not seem to have any opening, and what do they want a drum for, any way?"

I could not tell him.

Very stately and beautiful was the laying out of that temple. All these buildings had been in one large court, surrounded by mighty *daimio* lanterns, carved in the same granite as the Chozubachi. On the far side rose a lofty terrace built of vast polygonal blocks of stone, topped by a balustrade of the same stone, absolutely plain, but beautiful from its exquisite proportions, and approached by a broad sweep of steps, flanked at the bottom with the two noblest lanterns. Mounting those wide, easy steps, we arrived in a second court. I was wondering why no moss had laid its reverent touch on this ancient masonry, till, in the second court, we came upon a band of old women squatting like frogs, whose pension was to earn the trifling wage paid by the priests for weeding their acres of stately courts flagged like the Romans' roads.

This court was peculiarly the property of the god, for here were the stables which contained his steed, and the Ginko or treasury, in which armour and weapons that the Toshogu had used in his life-time, and various other relics were kept, and the Koyomachi tree which he had carried in his palanquin on some campaign.

"Who was Toshogu?" asked Rich, quite interested. "I never heard of him."

Candida looked at me to tell him, and I explained that when a person dies in Japan they christen him with a new name, just as they do when he is born, and that Toshogu was the name given to the greatest of all the military rulers of Japan, Iyeyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa dynasty of Shoguns and of the Japanese Navy, when he was carried to his tomb at Nikko, which is almost as famous among the tombs of the earth as that of Mausolus himself, whose memorial, after giving its name to all others, was razed from the spot where it was built, and carried, every stone of it, thousands of miles to be rebuilt in Bloomsbury for visitors to the British Museum.

"Yes, I have heard something about that Johnnie," said Rich. "He was a pretty good fighting man. If he is a god and knows everything about everything, he must be jolly wild with that rotten descendant of his—the chap that gave the Mikado a walk-over."

This was Rich's way of describing the last of the Shoguns, who offered such a half-hearted resistance when the great *Daimios* of Satsuma and Choshu determined to make the Mikado the real, as well as the nominal, Emperor.

"Why, I saw that bally chap the other day learning to ride a bicycle," he continued. "Fancy giving up being a king to take up cycling!"

"He wasn't a king exactly; he was more like a Cromer and Kitchener combined, with absolute power."

"Well, that's good enough for me. Where is that Koyomachi that Toshogu carried round in his palanquin?"

I pointed him out the lofty tree which is one of the glories of the temple.

"No, that's a bit thick!" he said. "Toshogu may have been a mighty big man, big enough to carry that thing in his hand, but you mentioned that he had it in his palanquin; and if he could have carried it I'm jolly sure his bearers couldn't have carried him."

"Oh, do stop rotting, Dick," pleaded Candida. "There is really rather a pretty touch of sentiment about this that doesn't go well with rotting. When Iyeyasu carried it round in his palanquin it had been dwarfed by years of skilful gardening, and these dwarf trees can only be kept from growing by constant attention to their roots. But from the day that the hero died, the tree was allowed to grow again, and has grown to the size you see."

The Temple, like the Toshogu Temple at Nikko, had a good deal of Shinto mixed with its Buddhism. The idea of the Kami, the spirit of the mighty Iyeyasu, being on the earth and requiring the use of his steed and his armour, was Shinto rather than Buddhistic, though the temple was a stronghold of the Buddhist hierarchy. The Buddhists were under the special

protection of the Tokugawa Shoguns, and those who regret the abolition of the old feudal régime rally round the Buddhist hierarchy.

It was when we reached the stable where the sacred steed was kept that Rich's interest suddenly revived. Not that the sacred beast was of a kind to satisfy such a connoisseur. A pony was apparently sufficient for the dignity of the mighty Iyeyasu, and it was not much of a pony. It was white, and its wicked blue eyes gave it the appearance of being insane. It very probably was. Insanity is regarded as supernatural in Japan. It was kept there, so that if Iyeyasu should return to the earth, whose Eastern seas he had filled with his renown, he should find a charger ready for him. Incidentally the pony was a valuable item in the maintenance of the temple, deprived of its revenues at the time of the Revolution, for it had an unlimited appetite for beans, and the faithful paid their sen for bags which contained only a rin's worth of beans.

Rich bought a dozen or more of these bags to win the goodwill of the strange wild creature, and he certainly succeeded marvellously. It allowed him to handle it before he had finished, though it screamed with rage when he made his first attempt.

Then he went over to the Ginko, or treasury, where various relics of the gods were kept, and the armour and weapons he would don when he came back to earth. In these again he took a great interest, perhaps because he had been a soldier. Even the dullest mind can take a professional interest.

A very nice priest, a friend of Candida's, was showing us round, and was evidently gratified by the numerous and intelligent questions which Rich asked, through Candida as an interpreter, about the use of each piece, and how the warrior fastened such stiff things on. Candida was so gratified by the change in his behaviour that she felt lenient when, after mounting another noble flight of steps and passing through a gateway, which would be one of the wonders of the world for its carving if it were only known, we came upon a Buddhist library.

Now there is more in the library of a Buddhist temple than meets the eye, although even in this respect it does pretty well with its six thousand seven hundred and seventy-one volumes of the Buddhist canon, which are always kept in a circulating book-case beyond the dreams of the avarice of the British cabinet-maker—even a Maple.

A circulating book-case to accommodate nearly seven thousand volumes would meet the requirements of almost any private house, and when mounted on a capstan such as was used for hauling up the best bower anchor of Nelson's flag-ship, they revolve quite easily. But the library's capabilities do not stop there; it affords the Japanese his best opportunity for indulging in the mystical process of Nazaraëru. The Japanese are our link with the ancient world. The Chinese might do as well, but it is hopeless to try and understand them, even in the superficial way in which we understand the Japanese. In Japan the gods walk the earth as they did in Sicily in the days of which Theocritus sang. In the days when he sang you did not meet them, but every poor simple person whose mind was not stuffed up with new ideas, knew that you might meet them in any place where the vision would be secure from intruders, and felt that they were friends to whom you might turn for sympathy in arranging a sin or an *amour* as naturally as in a matter of business or farming. That is just what the poor Japanese know about their gods, and though their household expenses may be calculated in fractions of halfpennies, they are never too poor to have a little light burning on the god-shelf and a fresh cake and a fresh sprig laid before the god of Wealth, Shinto or Buddhist, whom they make their patron. The gods of Wealth attend, not only to the fortunes of the rich, but to the daily bread of the poor.

Besides the old great universal gods, the Japanese have millions of *kami*, the spirits of the dead, who in world-wide or narrow domestic spheres lived the strenuous life. When these fine spirits consented to let their vile bodies know corruption by the sword or

missile of the enemy, or by the decay of natural forces, they did not leave the earth or lay aside their work, but pursued it disembodied, or in some fresh form.*

Their gods the Japanese have still with them. It is only when you have been in a country like Japan that you know the atmosphere of the Greeks of Plato's day, when to the philosopher religion was merely a system of morality; but other people knew that there were gods. That the Japanese have heroes of the antique pattern for self-sacrifice and prowess, who shall deny? Never since the dawn of history has a civilised people held its own lives so cheap, and the expert Jujitsu athlete can perform feats of the one against the many worthy of Samson or Hercules or the best of Arthur's court.

With their gods and heroes the Japanese have the magic practised by the ancients. The Nazaraëru of the Japanese is the self-same witchcraft which we see in the pages of Theocritus; it embodies the same principle as the wasting of the health of a rival by the melting of wax or the piercing of an image, which was rampant through the Middle Ages, and survives in corners of Europe yet. It consists in taking some type of the object to be operated on and convincing one's mind that the type is the original.

A certain woman wished to curse a temple bell to which she had contributed her mirror unwillingly. With her dying breath she promised that her spirit should give riches to whoever broke the bell. The people rang it so furiously, to earn the riches, that the maddened priests flung it in the marsh. Unable to reach it there a woman who needed the money took another object of bronze, a basin, to typify the bell,

*This is why, when the heroic Commander Hirose was killed by a Russian shell at the moment when he had succeeded in stopping the channel of Port Arthur, the nation acclaimed his death with joy as well as with sorrow, although they knew that the man whose knowledge of Russian was as useful to them as his marvellous seamanship and bravery would be visible to their eyes in his accustomed shape no more, they did not doubt the ability of his *kami* to perform so tangible an operation as turning a torpedo from a Japanese or into a Russian vessel.

and striking it till it broke, was rewarded with the money. The strips of paper, which hang in a Japanese temple, by Nazaraëru represent costly cloth of gold. The pebble in front of a Buddha means that the donor, had he sufficient wealth, would build a temple in place of that stone. Nazaraëru gives the donor equal merit. But the oftenest recurring of these good-natured deceptions of the friendly gods is that of reading the Buddhist canon. If you read a volume of it every day it would take you twenty years to get through the whole, and few poor people have the leisure for this, but when they turn the book-case which contains the entire canon three times round with the honest meaning that they would read the books if they had the time, they attain the very great merit of having paid this honour to Buddha.

"What does he say?" asked Rich, as the priest was explaining all this to Candida and myself, with the length to which the Japanese is prone. We dared not translate literally, we merely said that it was a revolving library containing nearly seven thousand books; and that he would be astonished to find how easily it worked. We told him that it was considered very difficult to make it revolve three times with one push. The priest had been telling us that extra merit attaches to those whom the gods allow to succeed in this.

"Jolly 'cute," was Rich's comment. "If that little red-faced flapper dies before I do—God knows I don't wish her any harm—poor little girl, if only I'm not made to marry her!—I'll have one of these merry-go-rounds put up at Richborough and use it for something better than books." It is needless to say that Rich left it with all the merit that accrues to a lusty push. It creaked so ominously that our hearts were in our mouths lest his roughness should have toppled it off its axle.

Beside the library was another building of scarlet lacquer, glorious with chased brass and noble carving, whose uses we dared not translate to the materialistic Rich, for in it was kept the great Mekoshi or palace

car which, borne on the shoulders of a hundred coolies, forms the centre of the annual procession.

"What is carried in this?" I asked, pointing to the great palanquin, resplendent in scarlet and gold, whose weight was so vast that it should need a hundred men to carry it in the procession.

"The spirit of the god," said the priest.

Candida and I were so struck by the majesty of the conception that only the spirit and not an inadequate image made by human hands should occupy the vast and resplendent equipage, that we had not the heart to tell the plain truth to one so inadequate to receive the conception as Rich. We told him that the car also was for the god when he returned to earth, and on other occasions was carried empty.

This awakened a most inconvenient curiosity on his part; he wished to have the car opened to see what sort of a carriage the god had to ride in, which was clearly impossible, for the car may only be opened by the god himself from within.

Undeterred he sprang forward to open it, but Candida seized hold of him, and when he turned round to shake her off he saw that she was crying and almost in hysterics. She was horribly frightened as to what would happen to him.

His manner changed instantly. Putting his arm round her and drawing her to him protectingly, he said:

"It's all right, little woman; I'm not going to do it if you're frightened, though I don't see why, when there's no bally god inside; and as for these priests I'd take on the whole lot of them at once if I had a wall at my back."

Candida smiled up at him so gratefully with her tearful eyes, those violets, as well as her lips, that he was rewarded far beyond his deserts.

Our presence was a restraint upon any further step towards reconciliation, which, I feel sure, he would have contemplated under favourable circumstances, even if she were not in the habit of submitting to it.

He was certainly sobered by this occurrence, for

putting his arm through hers he went over the rest of the temple quite gently and intelligently, and with such a marked propensity for falling behind that the priest devoted himself to Chiquita and myself. We had now reached, what to him were the most important parts of the temple, the two famous buildings which served as the Hondo and the Soshido, the main temple and the founder's hall, vast buildings whose roofs had their tip-tilted gables as loaded with a riot of colour and carving, and brass, plated with gold, as the tiny fountain canopy had been, whose loveliness had set us marvelling as we entered the temple. Both had picturesque galleries running under their broad eaves, round which the priests suffered us to walk to examine the marvellous carvings of birds and flowers and foliage, and the lives of the saints hardly less conventionalised. The finest screens of mediæval churches have no such triumphs of colour and carving conventionalised. And Chiquita was willing to be interested and impressed, I thought. I was prepared for her to refuse to go inside, for the priest said that we must take our boots off. But she acquiesced at once. She seemed to find virtue a sufficient reward. And it was a sight that I shall never forget, for when he took us in some sort of service was going on. Priests in gorgeous robes of white and gold were standing before the chief altar, and as their backs were turned towards us and their voices droned and intoned, and the smoke and scent rose from their swinging censers, I felt reminded of my one glorious year in Italy. We might have been in the Royal Chapel at Palermo on Palm Sunday or the church of Giotto over the ashes of St. Francis at Assisi, but for the glassy, jet-black lacquer which bore only on its polished bosom the long line of priests in snow-white robes, bending over dwarf reading-desks of priceless lacquer supporting Buddhist Scriptures. When Chiquita saw the damage that her little heels could have caused she thought no more of the trouble, and took a childish pleasure in the smoothness with which her silk-stockinged feet glided over the mirror-like floor. To

that black lacquer the priest seemed to attach almost as much importance as the generous gold lacquer of the walls crusted into dragons and other strange beasts of Japanese mythology.

Chiquita was dumbfounded with the splendour and inexpressibly fine taste of the decorations. In her excitement she kept laying a light hand on me to draw my attention to this or that which I was to ask the priest. Her soul at last seemed touched, and I veritably believe that it was partly from the remembrance of the likeness of her own services, which she had not attended since she came to Japan, to the glorious spectacle before her.

When we got outside again she would do no more sight-seeing. She sat down, and with much deliberation laced on her boots with the same closeness and regularity that they had received from the hands of her maid in the morning. She had the pretty woman's particularity about her feet.

She adhered to her determination in spite of the evident anxiety of the priest that we should see the glories of the founder's hall and the *kakemonos* of the Abbot's house, and the monastery, which I knew to be of the highest antiquity and value.

After seeing so much, however, it was natural that she should not wish to begin on the long low range of buildings stretching interminably from the back of the treasury, where the Toshogu relics were kept. The handsome building absolutely next to the treasury was the Abbot's Lodge; the Hojo or monastery, the Kyaku-den or reception-rooms, and the Dai-dokoro or kitchen, stretched on and on beyond.

We had lost all track of Candida and Rich, but we had agreed to take lunch in the balcony of a little shrine at the top of the temple hill, which the *betto* said looked the right way for the sun.

We climbed leisurely. When you are young and your companion is an exquisite woman younger than yourself, in sympathy for once, the way to anywhere is too short, and you eke it out with lagging footsteps and idlers' pauses. In Japan, blessed land of the

lotus, you have no need of a watch; the Japanese never think of time. How long will the day last? the night has a full purse.

It mattered not that it was a temple; wherever you thought of a seat there was a tea-house and the honourable tea-money is only three halfpence. It was long after one, so I should have paid my money and left the five little cups untouched, but the day was hot and Chiquita ate sweets and drank tea to the verge of any meal, so the newly-acquired taste would not spoil her lunch. She drank the tea as well as coquetted over it.

The mountain was most mysterious. It would have been quite uncanny at night: the trees of its woods were so very old and bowed and matted together with the wild wistaria and other tough lianas, horribly like the swarms of snakes, which crossed your path at every second and startled you, though their bite might not be venomous. The paths themselves, which led from shrine to shrine, lay perdu till you came upon them. The shrines were such poor little temples with ridiculous images of the gods, unprotected from the hand of mischief, and barely safe from the weather at any moment of the two or three centuries of their existence. I knew all the gods. I spent my leisure in the study of things Japanese, especially those which bore on art, and I found in Chiquita a most receptive and appreciative audience on this day of days. She had had no idea, she said, what an interesting place Japan was.

And so we climbed that hill, and I performed many little offices paid in smiles. I was struck with the fund of sympathy Chiquita had to draw on. We found our lunch laid out, as only Japanese servants can manage a picnic, on the balcony of that disused temple. It was sheltered by broad eaves from the fierce sun. Our boys had carried up cushions for us to kneel on I suppose, which was all you could use them for, when spread on the flat balcony. The lunch, with snowy linen and glass and cutlery enough for your own house, was spread between them. Rich

and Candida were not long in making their appearance. At first I thought she was taking her pleasure, as the English are supposed to do, rather sadly—she was so pensive. I wondered what madcapery Rich had been up to. I examined them rather more closely than was fair, but I could find no traces of a quarrel. Rich was boisterous again, and Candida disposed to give in to him. In the matter of sitting for lunch, for instance, he roared with laughter at the *betto's* arrangement of seats, and swore there was only one way of sitting on a temple balcony, and that was to put your feet through the balustrade and let them dangle over. The balustrade was, as usual, a plain two-rail fence.

"You try, Page," he said. "Girls are so obstinate."

I did, and I found that he was right, though it looked so absurd; it was far the most comfortable way, especially when there was the *betto* to hand you things. But both Candida and Chiquita preferred to do a half-sit half-kneel on the cushions, where the *betto* had arranged them with the lunch between them.

Girls are, as Rich said, so obstinate. With the *betto* in attendance there was no reason why they should lift a finger to help anybody at lunch; but they seated themselves in that uncomfortable way and made it the excuse for looking after our wants, because we were not well placed for getting at the victuals. We ended by letting them have their way, and were never better waited on in our lives. Chiquita, for which I was not prepared, took just as good care of me as Candida did of Rich.

After lunch we were destined to be the spectators of one of the most extraordinary adventures I ever witnessed, which, for some minutes, we expected to have a fatal termination.

I have mentioned already the marvellous and frightening number of snakes which we passed on our way up to the temple. We had paid but little attention to them, because it is a cardinal article of faith among the Europeans in the country that the single

serpent in Japan, which is stated by the natives to have sufficient venom to be dangerous, exists only in the fertile Oriental imagination. The said snake is spoken of with bated breath by the Japanese as the Mamushi. Well, after lunch, Rich suggested that we should leave "the beastly temple" and select one of the nice little mossy glades for our post-prandial smoke. I was nothing loth; I had become habituated to the snakes. But Candida, who never had any desire to pose, admitted that she was very frightened of them.

"What nonsense!" cried Rich; "why, I'd pick one up, any one you please."

"For goodness sake don't, Dick," begged Candida; but he was not to be deterred in any other way than by the agility with which the snakes themselves expressed their objection. Finally he caught one about a foot long, which was sleeping in the dust. He had the sense to take it just behind the head, remembering that even harmless snakes have very sharp teeth. I never saw a change come over any man like that which came over the Sandys' *betto*—he turned not only livid, but green with fright.

"Mamushi!" he cried piteously.

"Oh, stuff!" cried Rich, holding it up in his hand and shaking it.

"Yes, yes! Mamushi!" persisted the man miserably.

"Oh, Dick dear! Please, please drop it!" wept Candida. Both Chiquita and I noticed the "dear."

"You can't drop a snake," replied Rich, perfectly cool. "If I tried it would curl round my wrist and bite me. I can't let the beast go; I must kill it. Have any of you got a knife?"

None of us had. "But there are a lot of knives in the luncheon basket," I cried.

"Kanji, quick—a knife from the basket!" I cried in Japanese, to the *betto*. To my horror the basket was nowhere to be seen, though it had only just been packed up.

"Basket have sent back to *riksha*," he said. Why, to this day remains a mystery, unless some beggar had been waiting for our scraps and been bought with them by the artful Kanji to save him the trouble of carrying the basket back. All this only took a matter of seconds, but even seconds count when the sands of Life and Death are running out.

"Can't any of you raise a knife?" asked Rich, without the least anxiety in his voice. "This beast wriggles awfully—it's such a d—d slippery thing to hold. . . Oh, damn the brute!" he cried, for the first time showing the least excitement. "It's twisted itself round my hand and got a pretty good purchase. It will give me cramp if it goes on."

I racked my brains to think how I could help him. There were plenty of big stones about, which would have done to smash in its head, but it was impossible to use them—he had to hold it so close up to the back of its head. Then I thought of treading on its head, but unfortunately I had on tennis shoes, with rubber soles and without any heels. We saw its coil growing tighter and tighter round his wrist; his hand was almost claret coloured with the contraction. In a matter of minutes he would have to give in. The one chance was that Kanji was wrong about it being venomous, and that Rich would get off with a pattern on his hand, like a dentist's wax cast of your jaw, from the serpent's mouthful of sharp teeth. The threat of death did not move him; he remained perfectly cheerful, and suddenly called out, laughing:

"I've euchred it; only look sloppy, old man, and open that bottle of soda."

I undid the wire and out flew the cork with a bang, as is the habit of soda water in hot climates. We had kept back a couple of bottles of it and the whiskey to take with our smoke.

"I'll try and wait till you've drunk it," he said; "it's a pity to waste good soda water on a blazing day like this."

"Oh, nonsense, man!" I said. "Be serious—you

want me to break the bottle so that you can cut its head off with that instead of a knife."

"That would do," he said; "but I've thought of something better. I want the empty bottle."

The earth drank that soda water. None of us had the heart to swallow it when Rich's life hung in the balance. What was he going to do, I wondered—hammer its head in with the bottle or crush its head between the bottle and a stone?

He had a much more ingenious idea. He slipped the snake's head into the mouth of the bottle as coolly as if he had been putting a cork into it, and then he eased his hold a little. The snake craned forward, and he slackened his hold further. The snake gave a dash and shot right into the bottle. Then Rich calmly turned the bottle upside down against the ground, and holding it there, called for the cork. The cork had flown off into the bushes, and finding it seemed to take about an hour, but we did find it, and then he called for whiskey.

"I expect the whiskey and soda will be too much for the old snake," he said genially.

I pulled the cork out of the whiskey and brought it to him, almost trembling for the result.

"Now Rich," I cried, "no more fooling! Chuck the bottle and snake away into the bushes. Can't you see that Miss Begg is almost mad with fright?"

Candida was indeed a pitiable spectacle, but Chiquita, although she had turned the awful greeny-white which the Southern nations assume in peril, and though her eyes were starting out of her head, remained calm and tearless, watching every palpitation of this awful drama with breathless interest. I have noticed that the Southern nations rely on callousness where the Northern nations depend on courage to carry them through a crisis.

"No, I'm dashed if I do," he said. "This chap has given me about the worst scare I ever had, and I intend to keep him in my rooms to remind me not to let my pecker go down just like that old monk chap,

or hermit, or whatever he was, kept a skull in front of him to remind him that he had to die."

I handed him the whiskey and he calmly turned the soda water bottle right side up and began to fill it up with whiskey.

"Man alive!" I cried, "the snake will be out on you before you know where you are!"

"Not it!" he cried; "I don't think it could have got out if I left the bottle open all this time for it to try. I was brought up in the country, and I know a bit about natural history, and I've tried before now to pull a snake out of his hole by the tail, but you can't move him an inch. When a snake is drawn backwards, its scales rough up like cogs and hold it."

He gave us this little lecture with the coolness of a professor, while he was filling in the spirit which made the snake give agonised chokes, and then he rammed in the cork and put it in his pocket for the beast to die, in spite of Candida's illogical but affectionate appeal for him to let the man carry it. In any case, nothing would have induced the man to have gone within five yards of it.

This incident gave us such a shock that we commenced our homeward journey at once, glad to get away from such an ill-omened place. As we went down through that uncanny wood, there was a regular massacre of the innocents—the girls called on me to slash at every snake that crossed our path with my bamboo cane, though they were everyone of them harmless.

A good deal of time and effort was also spent in trying to persuade Rich to throw away his dangerous pocketful, but he wanted it for his mantelpiece. As we were getting into our *rikshas* he exhibited it to Candida to reassure her. It seemed to be stone dead, with its horrid shut eyes and gaping mouth. That it was venomous I had no doubt, for its two poison fangs were now hanging down. A non-venomous snake has even teeth. The only question was how venomous. Truly Rich was a marvellous man.

Though we were all so sobered he was the same irresponsible tom-boy as ever, while we made our way down to the horses and *rikshas*. He was pleased, however, when I volunteered to take the snake home for him in my *riksha*; he was afraid of one thing—that it would slip out of his pocket and get lost while he was riding home.

CHAPTER XIII

ON the next day I had to go back to Tokyo, for I was due at the Dai Gakku again on the following day. I said good-bye to my host and hostess with great regret. There was such fine simplicity about both of them. He, in spite of being a Yokohama merchant, was intensely interested in everything Japanese, in the common problems which awaited the two races, the English and the Japanese, as well as in Japanese curios and antiquities. She was so whole-souled and sympathetic, so unconscious of her beauty and popularity. I had told myself more than once during the last two days, while Rich was paired off with Candida and I with Chiquita, what a pity it was that the couples were not *vice-versâ*. It was hopeless for me to aspire to Chiquita's hand, and we might be very unhappy if we were married. On the other hand, if Candida's and my affections had happened to fall on each other instead of in their present directions, it would have been in some ways such a reasonable affair. I had an excellent appointment and should inherit a little money. She had, according to Mrs. Sandys, about six hundred a year. We could both speak Japanese, and were much interested in things Japanese, and though I had never had anything to do with horses and had no knowledge of gardening, with the latter, at any rate, I was as much fascinated as she was. We were both reasonable creatures with even tempers, and enjoyed life, and I should have been infinitely proud of such a charming and elegant wife. But Chiquita was the flame and I was the moth, and though I could not have called Rich the flame and Candida the moth, there were times when I feared that she might allow her happiness to be too deeply affected by his being such a splendid specimen of the Englishman, physically.

In the morning Chiquita came over to the Sandys

in the most friendly and gracious way to ask what train I was going by. I told her the twelve-thirty. She said she would go by the same train, and asked me to order a *riksha* for her too. As Candida lived so far from the station, Chiquita would not hear of her coming. She was sure that I would do everything for her, and finally Candida gave in.

As I rattled down the Bluff, and through the Settlement to the railway station I had golden anticipations of the journey back to Tokyo. Rich had returned by an earlier train for his duties, such as they were—not that his presence there was of the slightest real value, except in the unofficial respect of keeping up the dignity of the British Legation in the eyes of the other Legations. Rich might be an anxiety to his friends for his recklessness and his practical jokes, but among the Secretaries attached to the various Legations he was the undisputed leader. He had birth and good looks, always wore exactly the right clothes, and in physical strength and courage had no equal among the foreigners in Japan. It did not matter whether the risk was to his person or his purse, no one could bluff Rich, and that counted for a good deal in a Legation whose other representatives were a peace-at-any-price philosopher like Lord Clapham, an Offenbach Opera Englishman like Tiffany, a cheap æsthete like Finch, and a half-foreigner like Jevons, whom Mrs. Tiffany, with her bitter tongue, had christened “the auctioneer.” Rich was the only stand-no-nonsense Englishman of the lot. Candida had seen him off—was in fact seeing him off when Chiquita came to arrange with me and say good-bye to the Sandys.

Chiquita had rather fallen in love with Mrs. Sandys as well as Candida. Not in the same degree, because Mrs. Sandys was too busy with her husband and her children and the hospitalities of a great house to spare her the frequent interviews and confidences on which she fed her passion for Candida. I did not find these passions for charming women with noble personalities difficult to understand in one whose physiognomy suggested a romantic and devoted nature, but whose heart

seemed incapable of being touched by men. The fact was that Chiquita was very young, and had she possessed parents and brothers and sisters, would have been still at the stage in which a girl's devotion is spent on her family. To a girl with the family instincts strong in her, Lord Clapham must have been distinctly unsatisfying.

Chiquita, in going down to Yokohama, had pictured whole days spent in hanging round Candida—with me to fall back on, I suppose, in case intruders needed her hostess. The arch-intruder Rich had always hung on to Candida like the Old Man of the Sea. Chiquita knew Rich too well to have any hopes of shaking him off, and having plenty of intuition saw that if her heart at eighteen was impervious to the assaults of men, Candida's, at thirty-four, was of softer metal.

She had her monopoly of Candida in the morning, for Rich was luxurious in the matter of getting up. Having next to nothing to do in Japan, he did not wish to make the day any longer by early rising. Nor, when he was dining at the Club, did he go to bed late. Although he was a man who could drink deep and mix his liquors with impunity and did so on an occasion like a Regimental Dinner, he was habitually temperate, and had no relish for the yarning over pegs of whiskey which forms such a large part of the life of indolent men in the East. In his frequent visits to Yokohama he spent his evenings, when he was not with Candida, in the Club library, reading such books as "Geoffrey Hamlyn," or "Charles O'Malley," or the romances of Dumas, all of which were new books to him—he had done so little reading in his life. He was one of those who are never in the house except for meals, from the time they get up till the time when the sun goes to bed. The open air was his passion, and it would have been much better for him to have married "the little red flapper" and lived the sporting life of a rich country gentleman in England.

The last three evenings he had spent in wandering about the garden with Candida, catching fireflies with one of the ingenious contrivances used by Japanese

children, and when he had a cageful of them, turning them out where he and Candida sat down for the long *tête-à-tête* talk with which their evenings always ended.

When I left the dinner-table, Mr. Sandys generally carried me off to his library to have a yarn. It was all I saw of him during the day, and while we smoked and talked, my fingers were kept busy with pencilling the English translations of the titles on his superb collection of old Japanese books. He could not read Japanese, at all events, not the "classical character." So in the evening Chiquita had Mrs. Sandys pretty much to herself, and fanned her soul into a fever of admiration, especially after she had asked the question about the photographs.

The house was full of what Chiquita at first took to be portraits of her, but looking darker and sadder and gentler than was Bryn Sandys' wont now. This beautiful sunny-haired creature had such a very healthy and happy personality.

"How you are altered since you had those pictures taken," remarked Chiquita.

"They're not mine, they're Mary's—the child Mary's mother,—my sister, Mr. Sandys' first wife."

Chiquita looked surprised.

"Don't you know my story—what a very wicked person I am—I've committed the unpardonable offence of being my brother-in-law's wife."

"I think your story is common property, Mrs. Sandys," replied Chiquita—the most tactful and reassuring thing which occurred to her to say, though it would not have been a happy way of expressing herself to a person who was touchy.

"I lived with dear Mary after she was married till she died," said Bryn, "and she will live with us always. We like to have her portrait wherever our eyes naturally fall, and we want her child to realise that she was her mother, not I."

"I think that's rather cruel," said the practical Chiquita.

"I hope not," sighed Bryn, "for it is a sacred trust; poor Mary wished us to marry each other, but to this day I can hear her wailing, 'only don't let

my child forget me.' . . . Romantically happy as I have been for the past few years, I always long for her to be alive again. She had such a terrible death. Her spine was shattered in a toboggan accident before she was as old as I am now. She lingered on for months in agony and then died. . . . I have a great deal that I cannot forgive myself——"

"You!" cried Chiquita in astonishment.

"Yes, I. You can't think how shockingly I behaved to her when we were girls."

"No, I'm sure I can't," said Chiquita decidedly.

"But I did. I was so selfish. I took everything as my right, and Mary was so utterly unselfish and devoted that I imposed on her all day long. I was a vampire in the way that I preyed upon her personality."

Chiquita eyed her incredulously.

"You may imagine the blow I received when I saw her after her accident."

"Fortunately, its force was broken by the endeavours I had made to be more decent to her after she was married, to win her husband's, my Philip's, good opinion. You know I was awfully spoilt as a girl. People used to say I was very pretty, and my father had the finest establishment in Yokohama."

"In this house?" asked Chiquita, rather inconsequently.

"Yes, this house. But my father went in for all sorts of insane display and extravagances which Phil's common sense would not tolerate. Anyhow I was awfully spoilt. I was believed to be a great heiress, and I was the best tennis player in the place. The two things which Yokohama counts first.

"Well, to cut a long story short, the first man who ever had the pluck to tell me that I ought to behave better to my sister was Philip. He fell in love with her instead of me. Everybody else had passed her by, though she was quite pretty and far nicer than I was. I began by being very angry. Then when I saw that he never intruded his interference but just had the courage to reprove me when I intruded my bad behaviour to Mary on him, I observed a sort of armed neutrality till I ended by devoting myself to

winning his good opinion, and there was only one way to do that—by being a real sister to Mary.

“From the time of her accident I have nothing to reproach myself with—not even my being in love with Philip,” she added proudly. “I was in love with him, and Mary knew it. I believe I would have married him the day he married her if he had asked me, but though I was in love with him I was never disloyal to her, and she knew that well, and she begged us to marry when she was dead. She did not want anybody else to have the care of her child, though I was never to let it think that I was its mother. And she wanted Philip to marry me so that he should never forget her. One of the strangest things in the world, Miss Palafox, is that it is easier for a man to forget the woman with whom he has occupied the most intimate relation in the human existence, than it is for her sister, who may never have seen her from the day that she was married, to forget her. This is how blood is thicker than water.”

Chiquita was deeply interested, and more enthusiastic than ever about her new friend. She begged for a photograph of Bryn Sandys herself.

“There isn’t one in the house,” she said, “unless Philip has one hidden somewhere from the wife of his bosom, who strictly forbids it; and it is not his way to have any secrets from me. It’s a sort of silent homage I pay to Mary’s memory. She was his wife first. But Philip has a new photo of me, which people think very good, at the office. He never was in that office while she was alive, so I don’t mind my portraits being there. Call in for it on your way to the station. His office is in Water Street—*Avon, Sandys & Co.* He keeps on my father’s name.”

That portrait of Mrs. Sandys proved, like money and other things which are mighty good in themselves, among the *irritamenta malorum*. I, naturally, was not present at the conversation, and Chiquita forgot all about calling for the portrait. I settled with the *riksha* boy, registered the baggage to Tokyo, bought the tickets and performed various other small offices in which my intimate knowledge of Japanese saved

her a good deal of trouble. A Japanese station is in a perpetual turmoil. The poor Japanese always run in a railway station like your servants run when you give them an order, and as they are all carrying their baggage packed in expanding baskets, confusion is sometimes acute. As a ship had just come in with a lot of passengers who were going to stay at Tokyo, it was, contrary to the usual experience of first-class carriages in Japan, with some difficulty that we found a carriage with vacant corners opposite each other; and Chiquita's dressing-bag, which she begged me not to let out of my hands, weighed about half a hundredweight. When at last I had found a carriage to her taste, and arranged her comfortably and deposited her precious dressing-bag beside her, and her other hand packages in the net above her head, and was about to take my seat, she suddenly remembered the portrait.

"Oh, Mr. Page," she said, "how long is there before the train starts?"

There was a little under half an hour, I found.

"Would you mind doing a thing for me?"

"Not in the least. I shall be delighted."

"Well, Mrs. Sandys told me that if I called at her husband's office on my way to the station he would give me a photograph of her. Will you take a *riksha* to Mr. Sandys' office and explain to him that he is to give the portrait to me?"

It was not a job I cared about, because I thought that Mr. Sandys might not catch on immediately when I rushed in breathless to demand his pretty wife's portrait with the excuse that it was for Chiquita, but I went with good grace and managed it for her, and tore back to the station, arriving less than five minutes before the train started. When I got to our carriage I found only the umbrella which I had left, with considerable misgivings, to keep my place. It was a presentation umbrella and had a gold top with an inscription which I valued very much, from my colleagues at the school where I was master in England before I got my Japanese appointment.

What on earth had happened? Chiquita vanished!

and the umbrella I valued so much left to its fate. I jumped out of the carriage, with the umbrella you may be sure, and the photograph, and ran along the train. I found her in a carriage reserved for ladies with a friend, and handed her the photograph, for which I did not think she was quite sufficiently gracious.

"Won't you and your friend come into another carriage?" I asked disappointedly. "I can't get in here because it is reserved for ladies."

"No, my friend wanted me to come with her," replied Chiquita, after a few words which I did not catch, "and she prefers travelling in a ladies' carriage."

A carriage reserved for ladies, which means for old maids, struck me as quite the proper place for such a very sour person; but that Chiquita should have left me for the Sour Lady while I was away doing a disagreeable job for which there was barely time, to oblige her, seemed to me flat rudeness, especially as she had left my umbrella to its fate, after making a railway porter of me for about quarter of an hour to ensure the safety of her dressing-bag.

I turned on my heel and went right off.

"Mr. Page," I heard her calling after me, but I took no notice; and retiring to a smoking carriage, passed a very different hour from what I had expected in the journey to Tokyo.

I had pictured it as the crowning hour of one of the most delightful pieces of companionship I had enjoyed in my life, instead of which I found my mouth full of Dead Sea fruit.

When we arrived at Tokyo I gave up my ticket and hurried out of the station without waiting to claim my portmanteau. I could send my servant for that with the check which would enable him to get it, and I did not mean to give Chiquita the opportunity of speaking to me again.

I must own to feeling a petty satisfaction in not seeing the Embassy carriage or any of its servants waiting. Chiquita had evidently meant to go in

rikshas with me. Perhaps she would miss me when it came to getting herself and her numerous packages transferred from the train to a *riksha*. She would be certain, too, because I had taught her a little Japanese, to have to do all the worrying for which the Sour Lady hungered.

CHAPTER XIV

Two days after I received a note from Chiquita.

"Come at once, Chiquita."

She knew my hours—that I should not be at the Dai Gakku, and sent it to my house.

My pupil Mayeda was talking to me when the note came. I had had no intention of going, so I asked Mayeda to go down and say that I was out and not expected back till very late. When he came back I asked him how he had expressed himself, wishing to know the correct Japanese formula.

"Gentleman does not wish to be at home," was the message given to the Legation messenger. I could not help thinking how truly it expressed the situation, though doubtless by the time it reached her ears it would be translated back to the baldest English, "Mr. Page was out."

It required some strength of mind, for doubtless it was meant to hold out the flag of truce, and they had been delightful hours which were broken off by her rudeness at the railway station, a rudeness which amounted to dismissal for anyone with the smallest spirit. I walked right round the Castle of Tokyo, a tramp of miles, to work off my agitation, hardly noticing its swift changes from narrow moats with low walls, which had the dwarf deformed Japanese fir-trees growing out of them, to the tremendous sweeps of iron-grey rampart built of polygonal stones as large as some Japanese houses, shelving down fifty or a hundred feet, to wide stretches of water covered with wild duck or the encroaching leaves of the lotus. And just before I came to the triple gateway of the Imperial Palace I saw the British ensign floating above the Legation Compound. I did not weaken, I was

strengthened in my resolve. If I had only known it, Chiquita was not there, so that clenching of my moral fists was not necessary!

I passed a most disturbed night, and felt generally angry with myself for the fear that haunted me that I ought to have gone, as, indeed, I ought. But I did not hear anything about it till I got back from the Dai Gakku in the afternoon.

Chiquita needed me so badly that had she given but a hint of the occasion in the letter I should have swallowed my pride and gone. It did not occur to her that she had lost her influence over me.

It was all like a thunder-clap. The *betto*, whom Rich used as his groom, brought a note to her while she was having her afternoon cup of tea with Candida, who had returned the compliment of her visit to Yokohama by coming to stay with her. The *betto*, fortunately, could not read English, though he could speak it pretty well.

Rich-San, he said, had told him to saddle a horse, and had taken him with him to the Toshogu Temple, running in front of the horse in the Japanese style. When they got near the temple, Rich-San had asked him if he knew of a poor family who could take care of his horse. He found one, and Rich-San then disappeared. He was away for such a long time, that the *betto* would have feared that some accident had befallen him; but Rich-San often did these things, and had always turned up in the end all right. So that he did not trouble himself, but ate rice with the family till a priest brought him this note and told him to take it to the lady at the British Legation.

It ran:

“For heaven’s sake come straight back with this man. I am a god and don’t know how the mischief to get out of it.”

“Serve him right—best thing he can do is to go on being a god. He isn’t any good as a man,” snapped Chiquita, who wondered why on earth he should have written to her till she remembered that

Candida must be the lady at the British Legation for whom the letter was intended.

"But Chiquita, he will be murdered!" cried Candida, aghast.

"He chanced that, as he does about once a week with his idiotic practical jokes."

"Don't talk like that, dear," said Candida. "You don't know what it means to me. . . . I shall try to save him if I die for it!"

Chiquita raised her eyebrows. "Are you in love with that whirlwind?"

"I just adore him," confessed Candida; the moment was too critical for pride or false shame, nor were they in keeping with Candida's character.

"Well, I'll go with you—I believe in my star, and I'd be sorry to see anything happen to Mr. Rich; he has the pluck of the devil, and he's the only one who keeps you alive in this dull old hole, and——" But Chiquita thought better of what she was going to say, and did not finish the sentence.

"Think twice before you promise, Chiquita. I can tell you that it's an awful risk. I can speak Japanese like a native, and I grew up among them, so I have a good chance of falling in with the humours of the mob, which is all-important. There's nothing so vindictive as a Buddhist mob, especially where foreigners are concerned—they are the people who fan the hatred against foreigners!"

"Well, two heads are better than one, and I want to see him through with this, though I can't be bothered with him."

Long before they got to the temple they knew the gravity of the situation. The roads were blocked with thousands of Japanese in the old feudal costumes they don on the day when they keep the festival of the deified Iyeyasu. Tea-houses improvised under canopies of woven boughs had sprung up by magic all along the road. The air reeked with sesame oil. The presence of the foreigners was openly resented. More than once they were hustled; but Candida told them in fluent Japanese that she had an appointment with the Abbot. It was obvious that the crowd was there for a miracle.

Their difficulties would not be over when Candida saw the Abbot; and it was all-important that she should first know what idiocy Randolph had been indulging in.

"Oh, what *shall* we do, Chiquita?" she asked desperately.

Chiquita knew nothing about temples—they had not interested her enough. She had never been in one till their visit to this very temple a few days before. But she had intuition.

"The first thing is to find out where he is, and there is only one way of doing that. We must wander about the temple until he gives us some sign, or the priest who gave the *betto* the note comes to the rescue. It must be your friend, who showed us over the temple."

"Anyway, the *betto* will know him," said Candida eagerly.

"That's dangerous. Which way did you leave Rich-San's horse?" she asked, in a low voice. He pointed with his eyes; that was enough for Chiquita.

"Wait for us on that side of the crowd," she said to the groom. "The priest must choose his own time for recognising us," she declared to Candida.

They were none too soon; he passed them at that very moment, and in English bade them follow him at a little distance. He halted at the stable. They knew one thing that had happened, for the god's steed was covered with a dry lather of sweat, and had a terrified look in his eyes. Many of the crowd were worshipping it; they were furious at the foreigners' curiosity and jostled them fiercely. The priest was able to quiet the angry crowd a little. He explained to Candida in Japanese that this was no matter for mere curiosity, that many persons had witnessed in the night the god, of more than mortal stature, wearing his armour from the Ginko and riding his white steed like the Thunder God. It had lashed out so furiously that no mortal dared approach. Fire had come out of its eyes and nostrils. It had screamed with pride. The god was still on earth, but sleeping to rest his steed; fresh manifestations might take place, though they must not dare to hope for such further favour. The crowd murmured hoarsely, and the girls understood what had happened.

"Ask him where the god is," said Chiquita.

"In the Ginko opposite the stable," he said.

Chiquita, in spite of the danger, could only just repress a smile as she pictured Rich wondering how on earth he should get out of the "bally" place where he had gone to get rid of his armour.

All was going well, when Rich, catching sight of them through the chink below the lattice to which he prudently confined his peeping, hee-hawed like a donkey, partly because he trusted in the crowd's never having heard one, and partly because he could not resist the lark.

The crowd were carried away with fury at foreigners hearing the voice of the god's steed, and did not spare even blows in driving the girls off. Chiquita was swept from her feet, but had the coolness to choose the direction, and be swept towards the *betto*. But, shockingly bruised, and with her clothes torn off her back, Candida clung to the handles of the Ginko doors. The mob should not get to Rich except over her dead body.

"What are you doing?" she screamed at them, in Japanese, in a passion as fierce as their own.

"Off with you, off with you!" they yelled. "What right has a foreigner to be here when a god is about to appear?"

The last moment had come for her and Rich, but she would have the happiness of dying with him. Her strength had gone. She could no longer fight them away from the handles. She was losing consciousness fast; she only just made out that the priest stood by her again.

"Release the handles, my daughter! No man ever openeth or closeth the doors when the god is within. Let me take thee to the Abbot."

Extreme danger sharpens the faculties. She understood that no one would attempt to enter the treasury; that things would remain as they were, unless some mania impelled the reckless Rich to sally out. And yet, when it meant life or death, that he should stay where he was, her wits could devise no means of conveying this to him. The only thing to do was to

trust the priest. She knew the Abbot to be one of the ablest and most powerful ecclesiastics in Japan. What line would he take? She, alas, could think of but one.

The Abbot was an old, old man, with a face singularly like that of Pope Leo XIII., dignified, benignant and holy. He greeted her with politeness and friendliness, but passed straight on to saying: "This is one of the most serious episodes which has ever happened in our relations with foreigners, Candida-San. If the crowd gets hold of your friend, he will be torn in pieces."

She had no wish to play her trumps till she was obliged, so she said deferentially: "It is for your Excellency to speak. I listen."

"You and your friend and this bad man, who has insulted our religion, can you hold your tongues?"

"I and Chiquita-San can. And I will manage him."

"He deserves no mercy—and I am not sure that I can compel it for him. . . . Who is he?"

"The Third Secretary of the British Legation."

The Abbot's immobile face changed the least fraction. "That is very serious. The English will attach much importance to it. There is no justice where high policy commands. We shall be persecuted for it . . . yet . . . what can I do?"

Candida led the way to a window from which they could see the crowd praying for the god to appear.

"Let them believe," she cried desperately.

The Abbot said nothing.

"A miracle will add greatly to the popularity of the temple."

"A miracle!" he said; "how can I allow a miracle to be reported which I know to be no miracle but a sacrilege. It is impossible, I tell you, Candida-San, impossible."

It was not so much his words as the air of gentle and pious conviction with which he spoke them which dashed Candida's hopes. But her love for Rich lent her words.

"Indeed, I did not mean that you were to declare that which is not true, holy Abbot. The people cry,

'Miracle, miracle!' It is they who have seen the god of more than mortal stature riding the sacred steed. No one in the service of the temple has seen it. Cannot you withhold your pronouncement till some priest has seen it?'

"But that, too, is a lie, most dangerous to our influence. I can see no reason or excuse for such a course, except to save this foreigner from the results of the outrage he has committed."

"He will be killed!"

"He deserves to be killed."

"And I shall be killed!"

"No; you have done nothing. I will see that not a hair of your head is injured."

"But no one shall get at him except over my dead body."

"Why trouble yourself over such a worthless person, Candida-San?"

"Because he is my lover," she cried, bursting into tears.

"I would do much for you, but my duties are first to the institution over which I have been called to preside. Cease to think of him—he is not worthy of you."

"Oh, save him, save him!" moaned Candida.

"I can only save him by deceiving thousands of the faithful. If only I could see a justification, gladly would I save him for your sake. But to save his life is to risk the honour of the Order which he has insulted."

"Oh, but you have justification," cried Candida desperately, as a light dawned upon her. "It is not for the honour of the Order, but for its very existence that you must save his life. Listen. For years the Japanese Government has been demanding from the Powers the Revision of Treaties, which will free the Japanese from being treated as savages. It is now on the eve of being signed. But if an Englishman is murdered by a mob in a Buddhist temple at this eleventh hour, it will be said that the Japanese are not fit to be trusted with the lives of Englishmen, and the Treaty Revision for which your Government have

striven so long and so hard will be postponed, until they can assure the Powers that they have crushed the Buddhist hierarchy, as they have wanted to do for twenty years, but have not dared."

The Abbot took a little brass pipe, no larger than an acorn, and pushed a pinch of tobacco into it. He blew into a glow the charcoal in his fire-box of priceless workmanship and lit it. He smoked it away in a few whiffs, and began tapping the ashes out.

"It is very difficult," he said, "to know what to do. . . . It would be right for this blasphemer to die, but he is not worthy of bringing immeasurable disaster upon our religion. For this reason his ignoble life is of more value to us than his death. . . . But there remains our duty to the faithful. . . . They think it is a miracle—but if one miracle be proved to be false . . . how are they to believe a real miracle? They must be spared before him. . . . So, mind you," he continued, before she had time to reply, "if anything to shake their faith leaks out from you or your friends, the whole power of England could not stop these people from tearing him limb from limb. Can you make him understand this?"

"Yes. But the *betto*?"

"The *betto* will be told that he has not seen or heard anything."

There was a fresh uproar.

"Oh, how will he get out?" she cried.

"That is easy, my daughter. There is a secret passage from my house to the Ginko, for me to keep an eye upon the treasure. I will withdraw him through this; he shall stay here until midnight, then walk home. The priest you know—my intelligence officer for the English—will conduct him. His horse will be found at the police station at Shimbashi."

"Oh, why did you not save him before?" she cried.

"Because to save him was to invite a disaster for our religion. But now not to save him is to invite a greater disaster."

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Rich was at the Legation next morning for his duties

—those marvellous duties—as calm as if nothing had happened. None of the staff was even aware that anything had happened to him. But he found a message awaiting him from Chiquita, who wished to see him.

“You cur! you rotter! you idiot!” she began. “Do you know that Miss Begg has been nearly killed because of your silly nonsense in outraging the religion of the country to which you are accredited as a diplomatist?”

“Draw it mild, Cheekie!”

“Don’t ‘Cheekie’ me!”

“Well, Chiquita.”

“Miss Palafox, if you please!”

“Miss Palafox——”

“I’m not going to draw it mild—I can’t draw it strong enough. Do you see that?”

She turned up her sleeves; her arms were black and blue from top to bottom. “My back is worse, and it’s nothing to Miss Begg’s. She is very ill with the injuries and the fright she got.”

“Candida ill!” he cried, really touched. “Well, I am a beast! I will never play any of these d——d rotten practical jokes again, I swear I won’t. Do take me to her, Chiquita!”

“She is too ill,” she said, forgetting to object to the “Chiquita.” “Besides, you’d better know all you’ve got to thank her for, first.”

When she had finished telling him, all he said was: “I think I’ll go home,”—his boyish way of expressing that he was thoroughly ashamed of himself.

“Come back to tea in my work-room, and see if I have anything better to report,” said Chiquita, a hair’s breadth mollified.

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He found Candida alone. “Chiquita was very sorry,” she said, “but she would be about half an hour late.”

She looked not only handsome, but charmingly pretty when he said: “I owe you my life, Candida!”

It was natural that their lips should meet now, if they had never met before.

"I feel a mean hound in not asking you to marry me, though I should be perfectly safe, because nobody'd be such a fool as to marry me except Honoria. You know all about it, Candida. I'm heir to my uncle's baronetcy, but the estates are not entailed, so he has arranged in his will for me to marry Honoria, and the twenty thousand a year. Until we are married he allows me five hundred a year, which ceases the day I am married—so if I marry anyone but Honoria, I shall have nothing but my magnificent screw as Third Secretary of Legation. I can't ask a woman to share that!"

"I would gladly, but I'm not going to let you propose to me. It would be misery to you to live on that, even with my money added to it."

"Why haven't I enough to marry you?" he cried, with genuine enthusiasm. "I adore you."

"You don't adore me—it's gratitude. I don't think I'd marry you even if you had the money. You'd get tired of me, and make me miserable. But I should like you never to marry, and never to like any woman as well as me."

"Well, you're safe of that, anyhow. I never could be bothered with any other woman."

"Oh, Dick! How about Chiquita?"

"Chiquita doesn't count."



BOOK II

CHAPTER I

THE third and greatest of the new eras had begun for Japan. The first came with the opening up of the sealed kingdom by the Treaty of 1854; the second with the great Emperor Mutsu-Hito resuming the sovereign rights of his position by the Revolution of 1868; the third with the signing of the Treaty in July, 1894, in which Japan was to resume her sovereign rights as a nation before the end of the nineteenth century.

This Japan owed to the intervention of England, and England took the lead in signing the Treaty of Revision, in spite of the opposition of the English merchants in Yokohama—the most important body of foreigners in Japan.

Hard on the heels of this Treaty, while the merchants were still repeating that everyone of them would have to leave Japan in 1899, when its provisions came into full force, fell the news that Japan was at war with China, in February, 1895.

The British Minister gave a dinner-party to several of the Japanese Ministers in honour of the event. It was called a banquet in the newspapers, and as our relations nominally were as good with China as they were with Japan, should never have been given. Jelly-fish diplomatists can be very undiplomatic. It was Orlando Jevons' doing. Like other Secretary-Interpreters of Legation, he belonged really to the Consular

service and had had no diplomatic training—though what value there could be in the diplomatic education of a Tiffany, a Finch, or a Rich, it passed the wit of man to say.

Jevons' influence was beginning to be very great. The Japanese understood that it was owing to his unflagging and enthusiastic friendship for their people that England had consented to replace the old Treaty by a new one, which gave up from the year 1899 onwards the control, up to this, exercised over Japan in her relations with foreigners. And Jevons' obvious influence with the Japanese made Lord Clapham listen to his advice more than ever.

To meet the Japanese statesmen and their wives, Lord Clapham had asked the Tiffanys, Finch, Rich, and Jevons; the Bishop of Japan and his wife, the Dean of Tokyo, the Tudor-Roses, Captain Bradwardine, and, to please Chiquita, the Sandys' and Candida—and myself.

I declined with ultra-politeness and promptness, and as a consequence received a call from Candida, who was staying at the Legation, a few hours after I had sent off the note.

Now ever since her heroic rescue of Rich from the Toshogu Temple I had entertained the profoundest admiration for Candida, so when she was announced and came, the picture of elegance, prettiness and frankness, into my little garden where I was sitting after work, it was not easy to refuse her a request, though I suspected that her errand related to the one point upon which I could be adamant. As it proved. She would not have a garden chair; I suppose she felt that she could be more vigorous in a straight-backed chair.

"You've quarrelled with Chiquita," she began, looking at me full with the truthful violet eyes which filled so readily with laughter and tears.

"She insulted me the day I left you."

"I know she did. I cross-questioned her as to what could have happened when your refusal came—the odd thing is that she didn't know she had insulted you."

"How could she help knowing it?"

"I am quite sure from her manner that she didn't—the only explanation I can suggest is that she makes such slaves of men that they just grin and bear it, as the saying is, when she does outrageous things."

"Well, I am afraid that I am not built that way; and, as considering our respective positions out here, there was a sort of condescension about her making a companion of me, she ought to have known that I could not overlook a snub like that, especially after the affair of the lessons in Japanese."

"What was that?" Candida had not known Chiquita in those days.

I told her all about it, and going inside to my bureau, produced the cheque, which I had from the first intended to keep as a memento of the incident instead of cashing it. Chiquita was so careless over her bank-book that she had probably never noticed this assertion of my pride.

"I think you were quite right, and I shall tell Chiquita so," said Candida. "But have you no olive branch for me to carry back in my mouth?"

The mouth was such a beautiful one, with its frankness and its perfect teeth, that I had to make some concession.

"Tell Miss Palafox," I said desperately, "that if she comes here herself and assures me that the rudeness was not intentional, I will accept her uncle's invitation."

"That's quite enough," said Candida. "Chiquita must expect to eat some humble pie if she wants you after what has happened. Thank you for going that far," she added, with a glance of friendship from those truthful eyes.

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How difficult it was to diagnose Chiquita's character. That she was heartless and arrogant I had received good evidences. But her friendship apparently stood on a different plane, and she had no false pride when she wished to realise a desire.

Less than an hour after Candida had left Chiquita stood before me—unannounced—the picture of penitent loveliness.

“I have brought you a pig,” she said, “to ask your forgiveness,” and when I looked about for the animal, she pointed to herself and gave a little pout.

She half-raised her hand and let it fall again, and asked with charming timidity: “Will you shake hands and be friends again?”

I put out my hand; a person with such thought-reading powers as Chiquita must have read gladness in every motion of my body as well as my eyes.

“I did not know that I had insulted you till Candida showed me, or I should have come for your forgiveness that very night,” she said, with a warmth that did not seem assumed.

“You did hurt me awfully,” I said, to explain why I had broken off our acquaintance.

“I missed you awfully,” she said simply; “more than I should have missed anyone else.”

My heart bounded, but I had grown wiser by this time, and limited the meaning of what she had said to the pleasure she found in my companionship.

She stayed a long time examining my curios, examining the pieces of my work and my students’ work which lay about my sitting-room, drinking cup after cup of tea, then suddenly discovered that she would have hardly any time left to dress for dinner, and flew off in her *riksha* without putting her gloves on. She even put on her hat, which she had taken off to make herself at home, without a glass.

The upshot of it all was that I was present at Lord Clapham’s banquet in honour of the war with China. Everything about it was as odd as the breach of diplomatic conventions committed in its taking place at all.

Jevons, who was responsible for it, experienced severe mortifications when it came to details. The other Legations took a correct attitude and would have nothing to do with it. They were delighted to see the representative of Great Britain floundering, so there was nothing to do but to fall back upon the principal

English in Japan, including the Sandys', as the representatives of the mercantile community at Yokohama. This was a fortunate inclusion. The Sandys could speak Japanese, and Philip was favourably known to the Japanese authorities for the large sums he subscribed to Japanese public and benevolent objects, as well as for the moderation of his attitude and his great position in the English colony. With Chiquita, knowing quite a little Japanese by this time, the banquet presented the uncommon spectacle of three charming Englishwomen, who could converse with the distinguished Japanese, who took them in to dinner, in their own language. Quite half of those who came to represent the Japanese Cabinet could speak no English, having been selected for their posts, merely on account of their position in the great clans of Satsuma and Choshu; so this was a distinct advantage. Two of the most modern brought their wives, a great departure from the old-fashioned etiquette of Japan, and though, as a matter of politeness, Lord Clapham and the Honourable Thomas Tiffany, First Secretary of Legation, took their wives in to dinner, care was taken that Jevons and I should be placed on the other sides of them, on account of our familiarity with the language. Captain Bradwardine, rather typically, knew not a word of Japanese, though he had been instructing Japanese officers in the minutiae of naval science for several years. He might well have been excused for feeling rather sore about the situation, the British Government having required him to resign his post in Japan on the outbreak of the war, which meant, in place of the splendid appointment he had been enjoying, with a charming residence on the Bay of Tokyo, a return to the princely conditions of British half-pay. He might, of course, have retained his position by retiring altogether from the British Navy, but his professional pride was too great for that.

All the guests seemed perfectly familiar with foreign ways, though it may have been the result of patient study. Dinner dragged through its dull length. I was, of course, nowhere near Chiquita, who sat between two Japanese Ministers. Lord Clapham, when

he had finished the solid part of the eating after giving the healths of the Emperor and the Queen of England, made a speech which was a masterpiece of dull cleverness and pompous unsuitability. It might have commanded respect in the House of Commons for its flow of language and command of logic. As he spoke in the phraseology of the Oxford Greats School, he put all the Japanese in the room on a level—those who could speak English with those who did not understand a word. The most interesting part of the evening was after the Japanese had taken their leave, which was, fortunately, very early: dining out, and, indeed, the wearing of foreign dress being such an effort to them, that their chief desire is always to depart as soon as etiquette permits.

The conversation then became general, and I should imagine that even Lord Clapham, who was not easily aroused from his condition of philosophic indifference, must have gone to bed with a sort of mental indigestion.

As the Sandys', like Candida, were staying at the Legation, and the Tiffanys' house was in Legation precincts, though not in the same compound as Lord Clapham's, there was no occasion for the party to break up very early. Even the Tudor-Roses stayed and showed distinct ability in ill-natured conversation. Mrs. Tiffany soon had her batteries engaged, and, I must say, that this was partly the fault of Chiquita, who, though she did not like Mrs. Tiffany, enjoyed the excursions of her tongue. There seemed to be an universal disposition to regard Lord Clapham as a friend and host rather than as their official head.

"You must be jolly glad to have it over, sir," said Rich, with the air of charming deference, combined with freedom of speech, which he generally assumed towards his chief.

"And why, Randolph?" asked the British Minister airily, with his thumbs stuck into his waistcoat arm-holes in a way which accentuated the shocking fit of his shirt.

Rich was the son of either a very old friend or a connection of Lord Clapham, who had known him from a child. He answered with a grimace, and Lord

Clapham laughed—at the grimace, for Rich was rather a funny fellow in what actors call business, though he had not brains enough to be witty.

Mrs. Tiffany was bolder. "You ought not to have encouraged them," she said to Lord Clapham. "The Chinese will make curry-powder of the Japs, and some busybody will tell them about this, and there will be questions asked in the House of Commons."

He was not at all annoyed with her breach of etiquette in taking him to task, but asked in the tones you use to an artist on Show Sunday when you don't take any interest in his pictures:

"Do you really think so?"

"Think so! I am sure of it. They'll crush the Japanese like beetles."

"By the mere weight of their numbers you mean? Yes, I suppose about half the population of the world does live in China."

Mrs. Tiffany had not been thinking of anything so like Whitaker's Almanack, but she was always content to take the credit of wisdom which she did not possess, so she took the cue and said: "Well, isn't that so?"

"Yes, it is," admitted his lordship, having made the assertion himself. "I have no idea how the Japanese have been getting on with their army and navy, but I am informed that the Chinese have iron-clads, while the Japanese have not."

That it was his business to be able to keep his Government informed as to the value of the Japanese fighting machine never occurred to him for one second. He seemed to regard the Legation as a kind of compliment and expostulation Office.

Mrs. Tiffany was quick at taking a cue, and at once turned the statistics she had heard from Lord Clapham to account.

"Well, I work it out this way," she said. "There are ten times as many Chinese as there are Japs, so the odds must be a hundred to one on the Chinese, for one Chinaman is worth three Japs. You've had plenty of experience of both of them, Mr. Sandys; back me up—isn't that so?"

"Well, certainly my experience of the Chinese and

Japanese leads me to think better of the former. I do all my business with the Japanese through a Chinese Shroff, or I should be bankrupt. The credit of the Chinese is excellent, the credit of the Japanese is shocking."

"And don't you have Chinese *amahs* for those dear babies of yours, my dear?" she asked, addressing Mrs. Sandys.

"Yes," said Bryn.

"There, I told you," said Mrs. Tiffany to Lord Clapham. "The Chinese must win. I wish I had some gloves on it. I lose so many pairs by spotting in the rainy season, that my glove-maker's bill will ruin me."

"But, Mrs. Tiffany," protested Sandys, "we have many Japanese in our employ, for whom we feel the highest respect and confidence, and I may say affection. Some of them have been with Bryn ever since she was born—that ought to count for something, in your military estimates, and you must remember that the traders with whom we Yokohama merchants have such a bad time, belong to the very worst class of Japanese, only just better than the scavengers."

"You're a half-hearted fellow, Sandys," she said, forgetting the "Mr." in her testiness. "You never did back up the English properly."

"I am contented not to—in that sense," was his good-humoured reply. Just then Orlando Jevons came in from the congenial task of seeing the Japanese Ministers off with proper ceremoniousness.

"I need you badly, Jevons," said Lord Clapham; "I am confronted with the most destructive criticism."

"Why, what about, sir?" asked Jevons, in his bland way.

"The nation to which I am accredited," replied the Minister, rather neatly.

"What are they saying, sir?"

"The severest point of indictment is that we have done very foolishly in giving the banquet, because the Chinese are sure to win, and their Minister will ask for explanations."

"I am in a position to state," began Jevons, in

his most pompous way, "that the Chinese will not win—I will say more—that they have no earthly chance of winning compared with the soldiers of the Emperor of Japan. They are nothing but an armed mob, who, if they do not run away at the first shot, will certainly stampede the moment they see the brave Japanese soldier seeking to engage them with cold steel."

As people read the lines I have written ten years afterwards these will seem colourless words to describe the dash and heroism of the Japanese soldiers, but when Jevons used them they sounded, to almost everyone present, as the bombast of a dreamer, and when he went on to say, "It will be the same with the Imperial Japanese Navy—they have only to meet the Chinese to vanquish them," we felt that he was talking such rubbish that it was almost insulting to his hearers for him to utter it.

"Why," cried Rich, "the Chinese have iron-clads and the Japanese have only cruisers. It's blank rot to talk of cruisers beating battle-ships, isn't it, Bradwardine?"

"With equal crews, yes; but there are several points to be taken into consideration. There are ugly stories of the Chinese ships being supplied with dummy shells to fill some viceroy's pocket, and the Japanese are extraordinarily good sailors."

"For Asiatics, I suppose you mean?" said Rich; "not judged by our standards."

"Judged by any standards," said Bradwardine, in his deliberate low voice. "I don't think our men are a bit better; in fact, in some respects they are behind the Japanese. The Jap fighting officer knows something about the engineering side, and if a shell played the devil with the engineering staff of a British man-of-war the fighting officers would be quite at sea."

"Isn't that the proper place for them?" asked Mrs. Tiffany.

"I beg your pardon, I should have said quite at a loss."

"Will that make quite enough difference to wipe out the want of battle-ships?" asked Rich, quite seriously. Now that the Japanese were at war he

was more interested in them than he had been before.

"Yes," answered Bradwardine, after a minute's deliberation. "I think it will. If the Chinese battle-ships could force the cruisers to fight them in a measured ring, of course they would pound them to pieces, provided that the armour and guns and ammunition of the Celestials are what they should be, but I think the Japanese are good enough sailors not to fight except on their own conditions, and I don't think that the Chinese gunnery can possibly be as good as theirs."

"What a lot of croakers you are!" said Mrs. Tiffany scornfully. "And I'm sure you are all wrong, and that the whole world will laugh at us for giving the Treaty Revision to a nation which has become a province of China. But it will be all right," she cried cheerfully, as a sudden idea struck her, "for the Chinese haven't got Treaty Revision—they never had the cheek to ask for it, and when Japan is part of China, of course it will go by our treaties with China."

"Mrs. Tiffany, Mrs. Tiffany, I must protest!" cried Jevons.

"Of course I can't predict the result," said the low voice of Bradwardine, "but I can tell you part of it. China can't have a walk-over. I know the Japanese Navy—it has occupied my whole time for all these years, and I know that China will have to wait until they are all killed; they will never give in. They are not only splendidly trained, but their courage is quite abnormal. We have nothing in Europe like the Japanese indifference to death—they not only want to conquer for their country, they want to die for it."

"Really?" asked Rich, beginning to be as interested as he was in a football final at school.

"Yes, I can assure you that among the young officers who have been under me there is a patriotism which I can describe in no other way than by calling it the spirit of martyrdom."

"That sort of thing takes a lot of licking," admitted Rich, meditatively, but Mrs. Tiffany was irrepressible.

"They look like martyrs," she said, "in the old mosaics."

I could not help laughing, though I thought the remark in shocking taste: it was so true. The Japanese soldier has exactly the expression of the martyrs in Byzantine pictures.

"And how about their soldiers; they're as dying to die for their country as the sailors, I suppose?" she asked.

"Of course, and I imagine them to have taken equal trouble to have made themselves efficient—but of that I cannot speak with certainty."

"They are little tin gods on wheels," cried Tiffany, chuckling over his joke as if it had been profoundly original.

"Now it's your turn, Jevons," said Mrs. Tiffany. "You blow the horn!" and a laugh went round the room, because though we could not help listening to Bradwardine respectfully, we did not attach the slightest credence to his prophecies.

At that moment one of the Embassy servants brought a dispatch to Lord Clapham, who had been listening with the same half-amused expression as a judge in a divorce case. It was in Japanese, and was sent on by the Minister of War, who had been dining with us, and must have sent it off the moment he reached his official residence.

It told how only two days after the declaration of the war the Japanese Fleet had encountered and destroyed the Chinese Fleet, and the Chinese Admiral had committed suicide!

We all looked as if we had been shot ourselves, except the Minister, who enquired in dry tones in which there was not the slightest trace of crowing over Mrs. Tiffany:

"Is the telegram official, Jevons?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm damned!" muttered Tiffany, in a voice loud enough for us all to hear, and not loud enough to be disrespectful to his chief.

Bradwardine said nothing, but I could see the quiet smile of satisfaction, which meant so much in a man of his stamp, steal over his face as he saw his reward for these years of unflinching effort under an alien sun.

"I take back what I said about the Japs," said Rich, getting up and walking about the room. "If the Japanese cruisers took on Chinese battle-ships and wiped them out, it was a big thing—it was a sporting thing. Shake hands, Bradwardine, old man, I congratulate you."

Jevons left the room, for fear that he would burst, said the irrepressible Mrs. Tiffany, and Bryn and Candida whispered to each other, for they knew that there is something in the earth from which you spring as well as in blood, since at that moment they felt as glad as if they had been Japanese, those two Japan-born Englishwomen.

CHAPTER II

As time went on the war became a triumphal progress for the Japanese, but its interest was in no danger of ceasing, for it was full of records of the expression of that spirit of martyrdom, sometimes sealed with the blood of the heroic adventurers, sometimes not.

Bradwardine one day went up to Rich in the Nobles' Club to tell him about the forcing of the entrance of Wei-ha-wei. The Chinese Fleet lay behind a great boom made fast with steel hawsers. The Japanese Fleet was as mad to get at them as hounds at the fox. There was no means of removing the boom but by cutting the hawsers, and volunteers were called for the forlorn hope. Ten volunteered where one could go, and when the selection had been made, the volunteers calmly rowed up to the boom and cut the hawsers amid a storm of fire from the Chinese. The boom was then removed, and the Chinese Fleet destroyed.

"You'll be interested to hear who the chap was who managed it."

"Who was he?"

"Hidetomi."

"Hidetomi," cried Rich; "our Hidetomi?"

The name recalled to him the best thing he had ever seen. It had begun in this very Club at Tokyo and been carried to a finish at a Temple in Tsukiji. Temples in Japan may be used for any purpose without shocking the susceptibilities of the faithful. At Nikko and Tomioka they are let for lodging-houses, and at Ekkoin the idea of a temple has been almost lost in the idea of a wrestling booth. Hidetomi, though he had, with the preternatural cleverness of the Japanese, acquired Russian as well as English, because he thought that the predominance in the Far East lay between his own country and England and Russia,

was talking to the Russian Naval Attaché in English, the international language of the Far East. He did not wish the Russian to know that he could speak their language. The Attaché, in complimenting the Japanese on the tremendous strides they were making, observed, meaning perhaps to be complimentary, that the Japanese might have been the lords of Eastern Asia if they had not been so small.

Hidetomi fired up though he retained the unchippable lacquer of Japanese politeness. He said that size had nothing to do with strength, or at any rate, that strength was of no value compared to skill.

"This is nonsense," said the Russian, rather brusquely. "It is the physique of the Europeans which has given them the victory against Asiatics in spite of incredible odds."

"My dear sir," replied Hidetomi, with a blandness worthy of a family doctor, "it is not physique but skill. The European had a knowledge of weapons and tactics which had not yet dawned upon the Asiatic. In the mere matter of physique the Asiatic can hold his own."

"This is laughable," said the Russian.

"Not at all, my dear sir, not at all. Look at me—you see the height I am. I weigh not a hundred and twenty pounds, but I am willing to wager myself, not only against any man in the Russian squadron at Yokohama, but against any three you like to choose."

"Oh, this is mere nonsense," cried the Russian angrily. "Even if you could get the better of one of the men I should bring against you, by your skill, you must be so exhausted that you would fall an easy prey to the next."

"There is no next about it," said Hidetomi proudly. "I am going to fight them all at once."

"Are you mad?" asked the Russian.

"Who knows? I hope not," replied Hidetomi, beginning to laugh, which is always the most dangerous sign in a Japanese, but I can beat any three Russians at once. Get your biggest and strongest men so that you may be convinced."

"And where are you going to do it?"

“ At the Temple near the Naval College in Tsukiji. Bring your men there at five o'clock to-morrow afternoon when my work is over, and I will show them a lesson in what the English call the noble art of self-defence.”

The next afternoon there was a tremendous crowd at the temple. Nearly all the officers in the British and Russian squadrons summering in Japanese Seas were there, as well as a great many Japanese. The Russian Attaché brought three regular giants with him, big, fair-haired fellows who lacked the usual good-natured look of the Russian seamen, and were evidently the prize-fighters of the Siberian station. But Hidetomi did not seem in the least disturbed. He begged permission to retire and dress for the combat, and came back with hardly anything on him except the scantiest of waist clothes and a pair of stout European shoes, which, he explained, were to prevent his feet getting trodden on. The Japanese conduct all such contests barefooted, and the shoes were at once discarded when he learned that the Russian sailors would prefer to fight bare-footed.

We observed that the floor of the temple, which was of boards, had been covered for the occasion to within a few feet of the edge with the thick soft Japanese mats, and I noticed that the Russians were rather disturbed when Hidetomi explained, in English, that he had had these provided for fear that he should kill his opponents.

But like the brave men that they were the three giants rushed on him all together the moment the signal was given. The centre one sprang straight at his tiny antagonist, hoping to bear him down. Hidetomi did not shrink from the impact, but stooped forward to meet him, and appeared to take the Russian by the feet. It was all so quickly done that we could not exactly follow what had happened, but the main feature was that the big fellow went flying over Hidetomi's head, and landed on his face and stomach, knocking the wind out of him, half a dozen or a dozen feet behind the back of the Japanese.

It was easy to see that so active and resourceful a

man would have a good chance with any single adversary whose skill was not equal to his own, no matter what the disparity of strength and size might be.

But while he was throwing the big fellow over his head, the others seized the opportunity of jumping on him and bearing him to the ground, not knowing that the practised exponent of Jujitsu is never more dangerous than when he is lying on his back. That is the position in which he practises most, for that is the position in which his battles will have to be fought to a finish. One of them had locked his great hands round Hidetomi's throat to finish the affair by strangling him, the other threw himself on Hidetomi's legs to prevent him using their leverage to save himself from strangulation. Everyone thought him beaten and only dared to hope that he would not be killed by the huge Russian who was digging his giant hands into the throat of the little Japanese, as he would not give in.

But if the hands of the Russian were iron, Hidetomi's throat was steel; its highly-trained muscles resisted with ease the attempt to strangle him. He merely put out his hands and seized the feet of the Russian who had him by the throat as he knelt across his body. The giant paid no attention to what his puny adversary was doing until crack, crack! both his feet were broken like pipe-stems, and the purchase of his kneeling being gone, Hidetomi threw him off his throat like a football, and was able to attend to his third adversary, who, seeing the change in the situation, shifted himself forward on to Hidetomi's body instead of his legs.

Quick as thought the latter delivered one of the most deadly attacks in the repertoire of Jujitsu, bringing down his heels with the force of a steam engine on the Russian's calves.

Having stunned his adversary's leg power and stunned his faculties for a moment by the severe pain, Hidetomi, still lying on his back, now effected one of the grips which call the anatomical forces of your opponent into play, and in spite of the great weight of the man on the top of him, not only flung him off

backwards, but made him describe a somersault in the air which landed him dazed and badly shaken near the edge of the matting.

Barely had he done this, when the first man, who had partly recovered, came pluckily to his mate's assistance.

Hidetomi leapt to his feet in time to face him, and met with the heartiest cheer he had yet received, from the Russians as well as the English, when, gripping the giant's wrist by a dexterous feint, he put a lock on it, as they call that class of hold, and walking him to the door with one hand with as much ease as if he had been handling a child, opened the door with his other hand and put him out.

"I congratulate you on your victory," said the Attaché in the warmest manner; and the Russian officers crowded round to take a closer look at the possessor of such extraordinary strength and skill. They did not apparently share the disgust of the English officers at the poor sailor having both his feet broken deliberately in a contest with which he had nothing to do, except blindly obeying orders. One of the most powerful men in the Russian Navy was to be a hopeless cripple for weeks in the settlement of what was little more than a bet—indeed, it might be called a *bet of honour*.

They held aloof until Hidetomi, modestly disclaiming any special strength for the offensive, confessed to having increased the defensive strength of his body by processes only known to Jujitsu till they were impervious to ordinary injuries by crushing or a blow.

"Unless the muscles of my throat had been hardened in this way, that man would have strangled me in a few minutes or seconds. And now I will give you another exhibition," he said, "in which," he added, turning to the British officers, "I promise that no one shall be hurt—not even myself."

A pole was brought, and with it a pair of handcuffs and a pair of ship-irons, consisting of a short heavy iron bar with shackles working on it, for the feet.

"Will someone please examine these chains and bind me with them?"

The big Russian sailor whom he had put out of the door—a quarter-master—examined the irons and pronounced them genuine, and then was allowed the satisfaction of handcuffing his conqueror and making him sit on the floor while he took the padlock off the irons, slipped the shackles off, put them round the captive's legs, ran the bar through them, and locked the padlock through the hole in its end to prevent it being drawn out of the shackles. To make it doubly sure that he should make no use of the terrible grips and kicks which had inspired the spectators with an uncanny dread of his powers, he caused strong ropes to be tied to each of his handcuffs and leg-fetters, which were to be held by any number of the spectators. He then lay down on his back, and invited the ten heaviest men in the room to lay the pole across his throat and stand, sit, or kneel on it, as they chose, all ten of them, to keep him down. They were to tell him when they were ready.

Five Russians and five Englishmen responded. Their weight bent the pole till it touched the floor a foot or two each side of his neck. But the neck hardly flattened at all, and the moment they gave the signal, he inflated the muscles of his throat and sent the pole flying and most of the ten on their backs.

He then got up with apparent ease, though he was still handcuffed and had his ankles pinned tight to the bar with the heavy shackles, and taking his stand with his back to the wall between pairs of large rings about six inches and a yard from the floor respectively, asked them to tie the chains on his hands and feet to the wall by the ropes which were fastened to them, and then invited the same ten men, or any others, to place one end of the pole against his throat and press against the other with all their weight, giving, as before, the signal when they were ready.

No sooner had they given it than with a full inflation of the muscles of his throat he sent them all flying, while two Japanese assistants, who knew what would happen, jumped forward to catch the pole as it fell, and relieved him of his manacles and fetters.

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"I remember so well asking him afterwards," said Bradwardine, "how he could have been so cruel as to break both the sailor's feet."

"That fellow," said Hidetomi, "was a brute. He tried to win the match for the Russians by killing me outright. Any of you, unless you happened to have gone through the Jujitsu training, would have been killed or almost fatally injured by that throttling."

"And after that, I was a proper savage again," said Bradwardine with a grim smile.

CHAPTER III

THE China war spent its course; the English merchants in Yokohama and Kobe, who always constitute the most important part of the British community in Japan, were at first in almost open sympathy with China. The Chinese had served them faithfully in their business and won their respect; the Japanese traders who dealt with them were, many of them, welshers who looked to repudiations for their profits.

As time wore on opinion was modified. The Japanese in the field and the Japanese Government earned the respect of every right-minded Englishman in Japan, by their courage and magnanimity, and the correctness with which they "played the game." No European enemy could have behaved better than the Power whose claims to civilization were not yet freely recognised. In the opinion of all the Europeans in the East, the Japanese were "awfully decent" to the Chinese when once they had given them the requisite lessons to deter them from torturing prisoners and other inquisitorial practices to which the unadvanced Oriental mind inclines.

There might have been some members of the British Colony in Japan who would have had misgivings if Japan, in addition to the acquisition of Formosa, had retained control of Corea, including the Port Arthur peninsula; but when, two days after the cession of Port Arthur by treaty to Japan, Russia, France and Germany united to compel her to give it up, opinion veered round. It was considered that Great Britain should have interfered to secure for the Japanese the

fruits of their victory over their ancient and gigantic adversary; and it was freely prophesied that Russia meant to take Port Arthur for herself, and that Germany and France would find that they had only been cats'-paws.

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It was now 1899, and the English merchants in Yokohama and Kobe, though they still viewed with much misgiving the Treaty which was to take effect almost immediately, for their persons and their property to pass into Japanese jurisdiction, were sensibly more loyal than they used to be in their feeling towards the Japanese.

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The dreaded change had taken place, and but for the Japanese festivities in connection with it and certain fresh privileges of residence, of which most foreigners forgot to avail themselves, there was nothing to show that any change had taken place at all. The Japanese traders behaved better than usual in their relations with foreign merchants. Perhaps they had received a hint from the police, who are all-powerful in Japan. Foreigners, at any rate, had nothing to complain of, and help towards the establishment of good relations between the English and the Japanese had come from an unexpected source. Lord Clapham had always been pro-Japanese, at first because he was a Little Englander, and the England which sent him to Japan was anti-Japanese, and afterwards under the influence of the Japanophile Jevons. It was Jevons' ardent espousal of the cause of Treaty Revision which brought it about, and Finch, with his æsthetic patter and his Japanese wife, a poor creature, as far as he counted for anything at all, counted on the side of the Japanese. The Tiffanys, as ever, were the head of the John Bull party in Japan, and fought against Japanese influence tooth and nail—and the wealth of the colony was

behind them. But Rich, who had been one of the foremost in their ranks, was now on the side of the angels; he said "the Japs are sportsmen," which was the highest expression of praise in his vocabulary. He was strengthened in his conversion by the influence of Mrs. Sandys and Candida, who could not help growing prouder and prouder of the plucky little country in which they were born. He thought that as the Japanese had shown themselves so completely civilized, it was not fair to keep up the old barriers.

Rich was now Sir Randolph. Sir Cornwallis had joined his ancestors in the procession of ugliness, which characterized the family tombs, arrayed, since King Charles the First created the first of them a Baronet of Nova Scotia, in the right aisle of Richborough Church. Honoria had written to him on the subject, a letter which had renewed his mental uneasiness. With it came a letter from her lawyer, enclosing a copy of her father's will. The Rich crest and the heavy black border on one envelope, and the "Payne and Sons" on the other, gave him some idea of what must have happened, and as he always sought Candida's advice in business, he took the letters over to Yokohama unopened.

She was having tea with Bryn Sandys in the garden when she saw his familiar figure go into her verandah and peep to see which room she was in. He heard the rustle behind him, which a woman's silk skirts make when they move quickly. The look of delight on her face and the wifely kiss that was awaiting him when he had closed the verandah doors behind them, steeled him in reading the letter.

"Come and sit beside me on the sofa while I read it."

"No," said Candida, seating herself in the armchair opposite him, with her elbows resting on the arms of the chair and her hands holding their ends.

"Oh, all right then." He opened both letters before he began to read. "There's the will, anyway," he cried. Candida said nothing, but her whole soul was in her eyes as she watched him read, first Honoria's letter, and then the lawyer's.

Honorias letter ran as follows:—

Richborough,
Rutland,
— 8th, 1899.

Dear Cousin Randolph,

You will, I know, be sorry for me when I tell you that poor old Dad is gone. The suddenness of it was an awful shock to me, but I would rather have had it that way. Dad had been such a healthy out-of-doors man all his life that it would have been dreadful to have had him in bed for weeks growing more and more feeble, dependent on women, only kept alive by drugs. Though the time for saying good-bye was dreadfully short, we were spared all that.

Well, to come to the point, he went out shooting, and walked as well as usual in the morning. But in the afternoon he complained of being tired, and as he was a very old man, they persuaded him to come home. He grew so sluggish that, as they were crossing a road, they got Miss Bence, an old friend of ours, who happened to pass in a pony-chaise, to drive him home, which was not far. When he got home they sent for me and Sutton, his man, who said that he had been like this once or twice before, and gave him some brandy, which revived him a little.

I found him sitting in his favourite armchair, the one he used to sink into with a yawn of pleasure when he came home from a hard day's hunting or shooting—but suddenly grown so old that I hardly knew him. I was frightened to touch him, but he called me to him, saying, "Little Honor, your caresses are all I have lived for since your mother died and you were born. I'm dying now, and I want you to sit on the arm of my chair and kiss me your way till I die."

"Oh, you're not dying, Dad," I cried, confident that as I caressed him he would get over his weakness.

"Dearest, I know it has come," he said. "My legs are like stones. I should fall if I was not in your arms. I shouldn't mind, we Riches were never afraid,"—as he said these words he stiffened up for

one moment—"if I knew what was going to happen to you."

Then he said things about our marriage which would hurt me to write to you. You can gather their nature from the will, of which Mr. Payne, our lawyer, is sending you a copy.

Now, Cousin Randolph, as I have not seen you for so long, and you went away on purpose to avoid me before I was old enough to marry you, I can't pretend to love you now, though as a child I adored you, especially in your Grenadier uniform. But I want to carry out dear old Dad's wishes, and have a Rich master of Richborough, so for a year and a day I shall hold myself free to be wooed by you. I am not going to marry you unless you make me love you again. Will you come home and try. I'll get you a year's leave from the F.O.; Uncle Salrose can manage that. Do come and settle things one way or another.

Believe me,

Your affectionate cousin,

HONOR RICH.

P.S.—I've paid a thousand pounds into your account at Cox and Co., in case you have anything to settle up before you leave Japan.

"Poor old nunc," said Randolph, as he laid down the letter; "he was a decent sort if only he could have got that rotten idea out of his head. That made him rather an old bore."

"You mean your marrying your cousin?"

"Yes," he said.

"What a weary sigh," cried Candida, coming over and sitting on the sofa beside him. "What is it, old boy?" she asked, reaching a hand for the letter. "May I?"

"Well, considering that I came all the way from Tokyo because I hadn't the pluck to open it without you, I think you may."

She read the letter. "I don't know what to say, Sir Randolph."

"What's this new idea? Aren't I going to be Dick any more?"

"Yes, of course you are. Wasn't I to be the first person to have the honour of addressing you by your new title?"

"If you promise never to do it again."

"Well, Dick, I don't know what to say. I don't want you ever to marry any woman except me, but your cousin must be an awfully good sort. She's playing the game——"

"Yes, dash her, that's the worst of it. If she'd only bluster a bit, I'd warn her off at once."

Candida said nothing more; she sympathised with Honoria, but her heart was singing within her. It was so patent that the only place in the world for Rich was by her side.

"Dick, old boy," she said, with her cheek against his shoulder, "you haven't looked at the will yet."

"I don't want to."

"How do you mean?"

"You generally look in a will to see what you've got left you, and you usually get left—but I'm not having even that run for my money. I've only got to look for my orders."

"Well, you'd better read it, anyhow."

"I shouldn't understand it if I did read it," said he. "I'm no bally good at all at that sort of business. I'll look at old Payne's letter, he's sure to tell me all that matters."

He tore the formidable-looking envelope wider open. As he expected, it contained, beside the will, two or three sheets of black-edged notepaper, with just the formal amount of mourning, dated:

3, Doctors' Common,
London,
—— —th, 1899.

It began: "Dear Sir Randolph," and congratulated him on his accession to the title.—"You were only just in time, old girl," said Randolph.

"Read on."

The second paragraph was one of regret, informing him that the estates did not run with the title—they were not entailed, and had been left by the late baronet to his only child. Provision was, however, made for the continuance of his allowance of five hundred pounds a year until such time as he should marry. The said allowance was then to cease; but this would probably be of no consequence, because it had always been understood that Sir Randolph was to marry his cousin, to whom the estates were left. The late baronet expressed a very strong wish that the said marriage should take place as soon as possible, since his daughter was left alone in the world. Concluding, Mr. Payne urged Rich to settle up his affairs in Japan and return to England immediately in order to carry out his late client's wishes.

"Damn old Payne," said Rich, throwing his letter and the will to the other end of the room. "I've been longing to damn someone, and I may damn old Payne, mayn't I, Candida?"

"Yes, you may damn old Payne, because he has been trying to take you away from me."

Then she asked with just a quaver of anxiety in her voice: "Are you going, Dick?"

In reply his arms tightened round her.

"Is it likely?" meant more than any quantity of protestations.

"Well, what will you say to her?" asked Candida, laughing.

"Say to her—nothing. I never answer letters unless I'm obliged."

"But don't you think this is a letter which wants answering?" said Candida, fairly choking.

"Do you think it does?"

"Yes, of course you must answer it."

"Well, what shall I say?"

"Oh, I can't write your love-letters for you!"

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It took him about a month, and then he wrote:

Dear Honoria,

I am afraid it is impossible for me to leave Japan, when such important things are on. Lord Salrose does not understand their importance.

Your affect. cousin,
RANDOLPH.

Speaking as a publicist, he was right. Lord Salrose seldom did understand the importance of what was going on in Japan and China. He only stumbled on doing the right thing in giving the Japanese Treaty Revision a few months before they showed, by their conquest of China, that it could no longer have been safely withheld from them.

The initiation of this was due to Orlando Jevons, and most English people in Japan thought that Jevons had stumbled on it too; that his anticipation of the power of Japan was founded on sympathy rather than on knowledge. Rich, however, was handsome about it, for he went to Jevons, and using other words of course (though they were not at all more felicitous) confessed that Jevons was not such a fool as he had thought him.

"You are the only chap that sized them up a bit right. I thought they were a lot of monkeys that didn't amount to a row of pins, but by Jove! they can fight, and they are white men in spite of their skins."

This is anticipating. I left Rich sitting on the sofa beside a happy Candida, but her happiness took a curious form, for she had a tear in her eye and a tremble on her mouth when he happened to look at her.

"Why, what's the matter, little woman?"

"I'm not little—I'm more than five feet and a half," she said, standing up to show him. She was smiling brightly now, an exquisite smile. She put her middle finger to her eye and found a tear on it.

"It isn't ridiculous of me, it's gratitude—that poor, ill-used will is an ocular proof of all you have given up for me. It isn't many men who would give up twenty thousand a year to stay near a woman ten

years older than themselves, and twenty thousand a year means more to you than it does to most men, because, dear, you know you were just made to fool about in the open air, and spend money."

"Bull's-eye!" he said. "But I don't see how I could be any happier than I am now with you to spend my life with."

"Except when you are attending to your official duties."

CHAPTER IV

EVENTS meanwhile were assuming a most serious aspect in China. England, always prone to the *laissez faire* in dealing with the Celestials, had been deafer than usual on account of the Boer War, in spite of the thundering of one of the most remarkable voices that ever echoed from the East, which, after a moratorium of years, legitimated its journal's claims to the title of the Thunderer.

The *Times*, in a moment of inspiration, had appointed a young Australian doctor, who had been the hero of remarkable walks from Peking to Bangkok, and Shanghai to Bhamo in British Burmah. Acquainted with Chinese dialects and the Chinese character to no common degree, Doctor Morrison, for many months before the Boxer rising came to a head, laid bare its aims and its workings and those of the Russians who were intent on their time-honoured game of fishing in troubled waters.

As far as England was concerned his warning would have been in vain. England's one idea with regard to China was not to become involved in any hostile operation with China or any other Power. Twice she gave up her naval rights to Russia in a manner which seriously threatened her prestige in the East, and one of her Consuls, in giving a manifestly-unjust decision against an Englishman, whose charge of shot a Chinaman had succeeded in intercepting with a view to an indemnity, excused himself by declaring that he could not conceive any circumstances under which the British Government could support him. It was not in any way true that the Boer War would have prevented the dispatch of an English force to China. By

a foolish self-renouncing ordinance the English, while in the sorest need of mounted men, had precluded themselves from the employment of their swarms of glorious Indian cavalry and their gigantic army of the East in South Africa, while their navy was free for employ elsewhere the whole time.

But the British Government had no eyes or ears for anything but South Africa. Some people have supposed that the Boxer rising was fomented by Russian agents during the pre-occupation of Great Britain, the only other European Power with a large stake in China. France and Germany had already shown their willingness to play the Russian game there.

But there was another power to be reckoned with, a new power, smarting with its exclusion from the fruits of its conquest of China through the concert of the three Powers, Russia, France and Germany—that was Japan. The indignation of the Japanese against France and Germany was not as great as it was against Russia, the instigator of their exclusion from Port Arthur, because she meant to take it herself. The European Powers, in spite of the eloquent and well-informed warnings of Dr. Morrison, were in sleepy unconcern about the Boxer rising. Not so the Japanese, who, having more than one Morrison in their employ and living at the gates of China, were very much better informed.

The Japanese felt certain that it was the intention of Russia to incite the Boxers to fresh outrages until their cup was full, and then to step in and absorb a large part of China. This they determined to checkmate. Their emissaries were specially active in forming public opinion in Great Britain and America.

It seemed, however, as if nothing could be done. The British Fleet proceeded as usual to summer in Japanese waters—that is, the fortunate portion of it which was allowed to accompany the Admiral from the heavy humid atmosphere of Hong-Kong.

Some of the British officers who went to Japan flattered themselves that at last the oft-deferred chance of action was coming, but, the more sober among

them thought it was only a cry of "Wolf," and envied the contingents who had been landed for service ashore in South Africa. The Fleet had not lain for more than two or three days at its anchorage in Yokohama Bay when a chit came up to the British Legation enclosing a letter of introduction to Lord Clapham. The writer was the son of an old colleague, Sir Kenneth Rose. The Minister at once sent off a chit to the Commander of H.M.S. *Triptolemus*, asking if young Rose might be allowed to come and spend a day or two at the Legation. No reply was sent, but the next morning when Chiquita sailed down to breakfast just before nine, she found a beautiful English boy standing in a timid sort of way in the hall beside a kit-bag. Taking him for a midshipman—for her uncle had not mentioned his rank—she asked him in rather a patronising way what his name was.

"Kenneth Rose."

"Well, then, Kenneth, leave your bag there for one of the boys to take to your room, and come and have some breakfast."

He only smiled at the insult; he was accustomed to have his dignity hurt. Every time he put on plain clothes he was taken for a midshipman, he looked so abominably young with his smooth, round, ruddy face, and his glossy golden hair. He was as good-looking a boy as you could see on a summer's day, of the brave, blue-eyed English type. In boardship theatricals he was always the leading lady, and a ravishingly pretty one. But he was really uncommonly strong, easily cock of the gun-room in his midshipman days, and as ignorant of fear as a Tasmanian devil. Nature had given him everything but a soul. He had plenty of brains, but no intellectual inclinations. This was his link with Chiquita, who had no more desire for occupation than a monkey, though she occasionally showed a monkey's ingenuity in getting into mischief. I don't believe she often lost her heart as she did to that junior sub-lieutenant of H.M.S. *Triptolemus*. When she said, in the best patronising fashion of womanhood of eighteen, that he was to come and

have some breakfast, he entered into the humour of the situation, and showed an appetite for jam and marmalade, as well as for the interminable solid courses of a Japanese breakfast, which would have done credit to any midshipman. He had, fortunately, experienced no falling off in this respect.

While they were gormandising, the two of them, for the cubic capacity of that slender little frame of Chiquita's was astonishing, Lord Clapham came in. He had finished his meal long since, and was on his way to the library to weigh some phrases in his "History of Philosophy."

Kenneth had realised that he was, as usual, being taken for a midshipman, and risen to the occasion. He asked his hostess what her Christian name was, and Chiquita'd her in return for her Kenneths. Lord Clapham was too much in dreamland to see anything odd in the Christian names that were lying about. He only stayed long enough to welcome Kenneth cordially and suggest that Chiquita should drive him to see the temples of Shiba, the most superb monument of old Japan in the enormous city of Tokyo.

Chiquita, who could take a person's measure about as quickly as a Yankee speculator, saw at a glance that the temples of Shiba would be no more to Kenneth than he was to them. But there are other things besides temples at Shiba, so she acquiesced in her uncle's plans for the improvement of Kenneth's mind.

She was charmed with his beauty and his audacity, and meant to give him as good a time as she possibly could. So when the Embassy carriage came round to the door, she asked:

"I suppose you've often been in a *riksha*?"

"No, I haven't; only twice in my life—from the Hatoba to the railway station at Yokohama, and from the Tokyo railway station here. The *Triptolemus* has only just come in from Esquimault on her way to Hong-Kong."

"Wouldn't you rather go in a *riksha* than the old carriage?" she asked, still taking him for a young boy.

"No, thanks."

"Oh, stuff!" cried Chiquita; "you're just saying that because you see that the carriage is ready. If you only knew how little these poor men have to do you wouldn't be bothered about that."

"Please don't order *rikshas*, I really couldn't——"

Chiquita took no notice, but called out:

"Yoshi, I no take carriage! British Minister-San may require. Two *kuruma* call."

"What does that mean?" asked Kenneth, laughing. He had made his protest.

"Oh, *kuruma* is the word the natives always use for a *riksha*."

The *kuruma* were ready in less than a minute, and they bowled off along the broad road of Kojimachi, in which the Legation was situated, towards the great red gate which admits to the Shiba temples. The shrines of the dead Shoguns at Shiba are among the most beautiful buildings in the world. There, and at Nikko and Ueno, the house of Tokugawa which gave Japan, after a history unparalleled for the duration and sanguinariness of its dynastic struggles, a peace that lasted from the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the reign of Queen Victoria, indulged its taste and its magnificence. Sailors of Kenneth's age who are not of an intellectual turn of mind do not, as a rule, take much notice of architecture. But even he could not help being struck by the splendour of Shiba. The moment you pass through the vast scarlet gateway you find yourself in glittering court after glittering court, with great *daimio* lanterns in solemn array all round them. And the temples themselves are shaded by fantastic roofs with turned-up dragon's tail eaves which are, like those of Nikko, miracles of carving and colour. Chiquita took Kenneth into one of them. She did not suppose that he would either understand or be interested in the rich gold lacquer of the wall encrusted to bring out all the beauty of the peacocks' tails, or the glittering black lacquer of the floor as hard and bright as a looking-glass.

But she thought he would enjoy the fun of taking

slides on stockinged feet as much as she did, and that he would be tickled to death if he saw any of the priests in their white robes bending over the sort of camp-stools on which they place their canonical books.

He took rather more interest in them than she expected. In the Navy the senior officers drum it into their juniors to see as much as they can at their country's expense in the wonderful world into which their profession takes them. Every midshipman has to keep a log-book, and receives commendation if he makes it interesting. He knew nothing about Japanese temples, but he was willing to take in their points, as he would the points of a Japanese fortress, if he was being shown over one, and he was of course delighted, as sailors always are when they come ashore, with the vegetation, for temples have gardens blazing with colour from their superb blossoms, and are surrounded by deep groves of cypress-like cryptomerias.

The tombs of the dead Shoguns rising on terraces behind the temples, made of a bronze whose strange light colour showed the rich infusion of gold, impressed him less. They reminded him so of gun-mountings. "Captain Percy Scott," he said, "would have had a quick-firer on the top of each in an hour."

Chiquita was amused at the practical vein in the boy. The number of the shrines and the amount of money they must each have cost, seemed, she told me, to impress him most. Chiquita herself was not now such a savage as she had been about temples. They were no longer mere Eastern colour and queerness to her, things which she showed to strangers with a certain amount of pride, because she lived in Tokyo, and therefore in a sort of way they belonged to her. When she was going over the Toshogu Temple, she had shown distinctly more interested. The significance of things Japanese seemed gradually to be dawning on her. But though she was not always sincere herself when the personal equation came in, Chiquita hated affectation in others, and she heard so much of it on the subject of Japan that it was a real pleasure to her to go round with this boy, who viewed even

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the things which interested him stolidly. She did not see how much he was taking in, and said quite soon:

"We'll leave these old temples now and go and see the side-shows. It's always interesting to see the Jap disporting himself—he has so many child-like and bland ways."

A large Japanese temple is a town in itself. Its grounds contain whole streets of shops and shows; and there is generally more or less of a fair going on.

Chiquita was quick to notice the change in Kenneth's face when they found themselves among the holiday-makers in the avenues, white and fragrant with the double cherry-blossom. The little *moosmes* walking in twos and threes with flowers in their raven hair, and their peach-blossom complexions and their gay dresses with broad sashes, and scarlet under-garments, roused even his artistic sense, and both of them roared with laughter at the lower-class dudes, Japanese from head to foot, but with their feet projecting below their *kimonos* in red socks and yellow German shoes, the shape of walnut-shells, while their heads were in the height of Tokyo fashion, smothered to their ears in grey bowler hats. The Japanese likes his hat to rest on his ears. Each of these guys, even when he was as poor as a rat, was treating some child or *moosme* to shows or presents.

Chiquita loved the shows, and she and Kenneth paid their sen and went in to see the woman who could stretch her neck the whole length of her arm; the woman who could suck in her face as far as her eyebrows; and the man who would let you stick a sword down his throat to the hilt; and other human marvels.

Then they went, without even noticing as they passed it, the famous temple in the wood with the tomb of Hidetada, to a sweet little tea-house on the knoll, by the three-storied pagoda which commanded a view of the Gulf of Tokyo as far as the distant spars of H.M.S. *Triptolemus*. Kenneth turned away his eyes hastily, and they ordered little cups of Japanese tea, which Chiquita insisted on his drinking, made

still more undrinkable to Europeans with salted cherry-blossom.

But though he did not like the tea, he drank it. It was all in the day's pleasure, and he enjoyed watching the little *moosmes*, as brilliant as butterflies, who came and bowed so low before him, rubbing their knees and hissing their respect.

He and Chiquita tried kneeling like Japs and sitting cross-legged on the benches of the tea-house, and they tasted and threw away a pound or two of Japanese sweets. They enjoyed crunching their way over the fallen needles of the cryptomerias as they passed the Golden Temple in the wood, though they forgot to look at it. They enjoyed feeding the sacred tortoises in the lake of the stone shores, and swishing the water with the four-feet long trails of wistaria blossom. The rich sunshine enveloped everything in a golden atmosphere, and they went back enchanted with Shiba, and satisfied that they had done the temples.

In the afternoon they drove to another temple. Lord Clapham had observed so little that he regarded it as evidence of a praiseworthy ardour in sight-seeing. The temple was ancient; its tortoise-lake was more esteemed, its wistaria trails were longer than those of Shiba.

But it was neither of these advantages which took Chiquita to Kameido. She chose it because to her there seemed less to do there than anywhere else, because the arbour over the lake was the prettiest place she knew for idling away an early summer sunset. At home visitors might call, or Lord Clapham might feel compelled to show his visitor some attention. At Kameido they could have themselves to themselves, and she felt that she could rely on Kenneth not saying one thing that was worth listening to. That was her idea of pleasure—the *dolce far niente*.

In the main she was right. Kenneth had no vanity, but he had an idea that it was rude not to talk when you were with a lady, and he had nothing to talk about except his life on board ship, his little hopes and smaller jokes. The absence of any attempt to

swagger, the admissions about small things that he could not afford, or meant to do when he could afford them, took Chiquita's fancy mightily.

How she longed to put her purse, that full little purse, into his hands and tell him to afford himself everything for a week of Sundays. She did not know that he was a man; she thought he was still a midshipman. But anyhow, here was an officer of the premier Navy in the world, who would doubtless know a good deal about the business of fighting battles, as simple in his tastes and aims as a schoolboy. They went home fast friends. There Lord Clapham had a surprise for them. Somehow or other his surprises usually hung fire in the matter of gratifying his niece. On this occasion, when she had been looking forward to a delightful *tête-à-tête* as soon as he forgot their existence and retired to polish phrases in his "History of Philosophy," she found that he had asked Captain Hidetomi to dinner with them.

If it had been anybody else, Chiquita would have been seriously annoyed, but Hidetomi always went away very early, and she had a very soft spot in her heart for this heroic man.

She would rather have had him on another evening, because, difficult as it ordinarily is to kill two birds with one stone, it is yet more difficult if the birds happen to be lovers, unless you wish to play them off against each other.

Lord Clapham saw that she was not best pleased, but he was supported by a conscious sense of rectitude. He felt that he had done the right thing in giving Kenneth the opportunity of meeting a distinguished Japanese officer. The worst of it was that Kenneth seemed to think so too. Chiquita was very much mortified at the boy's obvious satisfaction in meeting Captain Hidetomi. He ought, in common compliment to her, have considered it an unmitigated bore, and made an excuse to leave Lord Clapham and his Japanese guest the moment that coffee had been brought in. As Chiquita left them over their wine she felt a pleasurable thrill of excitement. Every sound she

heard she pictured the boy with his fair young face, flushed with excitement, darting in on her to say: "I left them arguing over this," or "I gave that old Jap the slip as soon as such and such a thing happened." But an hour and more passed and no Kenneth had appeared.

Lord Clapham always tried to do the right thing, though, to use a familiar Japanese expression, he had a way of carrying the image upside down. But I doubt if he had any conception that he would be giving Kenneth a pleasure when he asked Captain Hidetomi for the boy to meet. But Kenneth was fascinated. Everybody in the Fleet had heard, though Lord Clapham had not, of the wiry little Japanese having Jujitsu'd the three biggest men on the Russian flagship, as well as of his heroic exploit in cutting away the boom at Wei-ha-wei. He was the man they always quoted as an instance of the superhuman agility and courage of the Japanese athlete. Kenneth was not prepared to have the honour of meeting the hero of so many yarns, and still less prepared to find him speaking English fluently and acquainted with the whole history and working of the British Navy. Kenneth sat as it were at his feet, open-mouthed, while the little Jap talked with the moderation which is the tradition of that marvellous fighting machine—their navy. Hidetomi, for his part, was mightily pleased with the boy. Having received his training on the *Britannia* in England, and having been thrown very much in contact with British naval officers, he knew something of our national characteristics, and he saw in the boy an unusually fine specimen of the well-born fighting Englishman. He had often observed in his silent Asiatic way that arrogance is natural to the Englishman of this type, who adds to a fearless disposition the belief that it is impossible to compare anyone to the right sort of Briton.

It was therefore a pleasant surprise to him to meet an unusually fine specimen of the type so modest and eager to listen as this boy.

It would have taken a clever man to say how much

Chiquita entered into the boy's thoughts. He might have been longing to go to her, but restrained by the respect he owed to Lord Clapham's distinguished Japanese guest. Or he might not have been thinking about her at all, but simply enjoying unlimited good cigarettes, a conversation with a most distinguished foreign naval officer, and a particularly easy chair. His long confidences of the afternoon had arisen honestly from the fact that he started to make conversation, and simply rambled on. Chiquita was a very nice girl, but he hardly thought about girls. Lord Clapham left them talking while he went away to attend to some small routine matters of Legation work, which were usually performed by Jevons.

The two officers sat on till their host came back and suggested a whiskey and soda in the library. The Japanese excused himself and said good-bye, expressing the polite wish that he might see more of Kenneth. Kenneth, after bidding him a respectful farewell, said that he would like some "soda plain."

Though the library was the room where Lord Clapham did all his reading as well as the Legation business, Chiquita was there lying down, reading a magazine and drinking an iced lemon squash through a straw.

"Come here and talk to me," she said with pretty imperiousness, putting her graceful feet down to make room for him on the sofa. One exquisite slipper had fallen on the floor. Kenneth was very young; he put it on for her without noticing foot or slipper. "Uncle won't hear us," she said; "he's got a new German book on philosophy. Don't drink that nasty soda; the least you can do is to have a lemon squash."

"Lemon squashes are bully."

She said no more for a while, but kept her mouth intently on the straw in her squash, which she held right down on the sugar.

She was nettled at not having played him right. Her theory was, that the more she left men to find their way to her the more they wanted to do it. It suited her wayward, independent spirit, and had

proved more effective than the sweetest smile. But Kenneth had not had "the savvy" to find his way to her. Had he not cared to try after those long conversations in the afternoon? She secretly hoped so. It would be a new experience for her to find a man or boy so young in his feelings that he had to be drawn on.

Kenneth was a dear boy, and two precious hours had been wasted which might have been spent in "rotting," or comparing notes between these two young things. They had an hour or two as it was, for Lord Clapham read deep into the night to make up for the afternoon siesta. It was late before Chiquita summoned energy to give the signal for going to bed.

After they had gone to bed an extraordinary thing happened to her. She seemed to be wide awake, but there was another bed in the room, of a kind which she had never seen before, a Chinese bed of carved black wood and marble, and on it lay a man horribly mangled by a shell. A tall man with a grizzled beard and dark hair, and a small weather-beaten face, full of command and intellect, but with very kind eyes, was bending over the wounded officer, and as he stood there she made out, she did not know how, that the mangled man was Kenneth Rose. And then the vision vanished.

She was wide awake now, wide awake with her nerves strung by the sickening feeling that something not merely supernatural was happening. She listened as one can only listen when one wakes up with a start in the dead of night.

Yes, there was a noise—it sounded like people trying to break into the house, and there were excited voices.

"It must be the mob assaulting the Legation—the *Soshi* rising against the foreigners in Japan, as the Boxers were doing in China. It was certainly disquieting that the Japanese should have again chosen a time when Mr. Jevons was away with Mr. Finch. It showed so conclusively that there was a traitor or spy in the Legation.

Why did not the Legation watchman hear them.

Could he have been bribed, or had he been enticed out and stunned? She remembered too well how the burglars had got into the Legation without any of the servants hearing them. This, too, must have been an arranged thing.

Chiquita was very courageous; she was more frightened by the vision than by the noise. She flew into her clothes to go and see what it was. But half way across the Compound she turned back. Her ankles had pained her for weeks from the tight cords with which the robbers bound her. In a second she was ashamed of herself and went forward; and it could not be burglars—they would not be shouting; so she dashed on. But before she got to the gate she turned again. Unless she opened it she would learn nothing, and when once she had opened it there would be no time to get help.

But what help was there? The servants would have run away, even if they were not accomplices. She could have cursed her uncle for his folly in adhering to low-born Japanese servants. Why could he not have taken people's advice and have *Samurai* for servants? His continuing to have the others was sheer obstinacy. Weak people are so often obstinate. It was not the first time that she had wished that her uncle was more like the ordinary Englishman. At any rate, he was the only Englishman in the house now, except young Kenneth. Her uncle, who was not a man of active habits, counted for nothing. Kenneth, of course, would fight until he was stunned, but it would be in vain. One man could not prevail against a mob. If she went alone she might be able to reason with them. She did not know how little a mob respects womanhood.

The hammering and shouting grew louder and louder. What was this cry of "Mistaloze, Mistaloze!"

She nerved herself and flung back the bolts.

She opened the wicket door.

There was a crowd of Japanese outside, led by a Chinaman—a Boxer, she thought. But as they did not spring on her she stood still.

"Me wantee Mistaloze — me wantee Mistaloze!" cried the Chinaman excitedly.

It was Kenneth Rose they wanted—that was clear. Had he, too, been going in for idiotic skylarking, like Sir Randolph Rich? What a trouble these dare-devil young Englishmen were!

"This not place for Mr. Rose," she said. "You go to British Consul. Makee complaint there."

"Me no wantee makee complaint; me wantee Mistaloze."

"You makee British Minister very angry, you very bad man, disturbee him middle of night. You go away, or I callee police. *Chop! chop!*"

"Me not bad man; we no wantee disturbee Berlitis Minister; me wantee Mistaloze. Ship sailee, Commander wantee. Mistaloze here—you call him."

"You waitee," she said, and shot the bolts. The door of the porter's lodge was open. She called to him. He was not there; she went in; a blanket trailing from the bunk to the floor showed that he had bolted when he heard the noise. Oh, why had her uncle not got servants of *Samurai* birth who would fight for their master?

There was nothing for it but to make her uncle rouse Kenneth.

Lord Clapham was not in bed; he was fast asleep in an armchair. The "System of Philosophy" of that eminent German was lying face downwards on the floor.

"Uncle, wake! Uncle!"

"What is it?" he asked, as composedly as if he had been awake all the time.

"The porter has run away, and there are a whole lot of people hammering at the gates for Kenneth, Mr. Rose."

"Dear me! what are we to do?"

"Wake him, I suppose, and let him settle for himself. They have some story of his ship sailing and the Commander wanting him."

"What a very odd thing."

"Yes, but wake him!"

He got up and went to Kenneth's room. She followed him on tiptoe. She had a passion for observing the ridiculous, and wanted to peep at what her uncle would do.

He knocked at Kenneth's door. No answer came. He knocked again; still no answer. He turned round helplessly to go and find Chiquita, and almost trod on her.

"Go in!" she said peremptorily. "Midshipmen don't get such quiet nights as you do. He went in. The electric light was still on, and Kenneth was clutching "*Madame Chrysanthème*," an American translation of it, but sleeping hard enough for a trance. Against the white pillow and counterpane he looked more boyish and seraphic than ever; but horrors! he was lying exactly in the position of the dying man in her dream. She gave a little shudder, but recovered herself with characteristic courage and light-heartedness.

"Shall I kiss him, Uncle? They say that wakes you quicker than anything else."

"I don't think that can be a fact," answered Lord Clapham. It might have been an extreme of sarcasm, but he did not seem to turn a hair at Chiquita's proposal. She felt very much inclined to carry it out; he looked so pink and innocent, but it might make her miss the fun of seeing her uncle try to wake him. She nudged Lord Clapham.

"Wake him!"

She could not help laughing. It was as difficult for the British Minister to Japan to tackle a sleeping midshipman as it would have been if he had been called in to wake a boa-constrictor. He could not give a shake. Laying his hand on the sleeper and calling to him had less effect than a fly walking over the boy's face would have had.

Chiquita suggested the sponge, and after a great deal of persuasion Lord Clapham took it. But instead of giving Kenneth what boys would call a "cold pig," he sponged his face like a hospital nurse.

At last Kenneth started up and Chiquita fled,

expecting some forecastle language, but Kenneth awoke with a silence which may have been an art cultivated by midshipmen to disappoint practical jokers. Her uncle called after her to come to the door and explain. He could not make Kenneth believe anything, not even that he was the British Minister.

Chiquita repeated in a shrill voice what she had heard from the Chinaman.

"Oh, it's the other chaps," said Kenneth. "I call it jolly cheek of them coming here with their gibes," and turned over to go to sleep again.

But Chiquita was convinced that it was not a practical joke.

"Kenneth!" she shouted, "do you hear me? Kenneth! Kenneth!"

"Oh, Chiquita," he said, after about half a minute, "it's you, is it? Well, what is it?"

"There are some people shouting for you outside, and you must get up and go and see what they want."

She told him again what had happened at the gate.

"I'll swear it is one of the other chaps dressed up as a Chinaman. I say, it is awful cheek, isn't it? their coming here. Wouldn't the Commander be mad if it got to his ears!"

He was into his clothes like a flash of lightning. Chiquita and her uncle were going to accompany him to the gate, but he said "I think I'd better go alone; it can't be a row; it must be one of our fellows. I should like to let him know what I think."

There was a hint of language or summary vengeance which Chiquita took.

"We'll wait in the hall," she said, laying her hand on her uncle's arm. They heard the door unbolted and a parley going on.

Then Kenneth returned looking like a grown-up man.

"It's all right," he said; "the old Chinaman's our compradore; he's brought me a chit from the Commander. I think you ought to see it, sir."

He handed it to Lord Clapham. It ran:—

"Join the ship at once; grave news from China. Ship ordered to Hong-Kong at full steam." The latter

part of the note was evidently for Lord Clapham's eyes in case he had not received the news. The Commander of H.M.S. *Triptolemus* was not given to entering into explanations with junior officers.

"There's a *riksha* with two runners waiting for me, sir, and I shall have to go to Yokohama as fast as they can run. Then he hurried after Chiquita, who had gone on, he hoped, with the idea of giving her uncle the slip.

"It's war, Chiquita," he cried. "Isn't it splendid, unless some poor devils have been massacred." She did not reply; she looked as if she had seen a ghost. And she had seen her ghost less than an hour ago. She felt convinced that Kenneth was going to lose his life, and she racked her ingenious brain to think how she could save him. She must save him.

"Aren't you glad, Chiquita?"

"Oh, Kenneth!" she cried, "what have boys so young as you got to do with the shedding of blood?"

"It is what we sign on for, that's all," he replied, as if the question possessed no seriousness.

"Good-bye, Kenneth," she said, with a sadness of which he would not have believed her capable.

"Good-bye, Chiquita," he cried, with a note of gladness in his voice that she resented.

"Aren't you sorry to go?" she asked reproachfully.

"Sorry for one thing. I haven't slept in a bed for more than a year, and you can't think how I looked forward to this one long night in bed, instead of eleven to five in a bunk. I knew it was too good to be true."

"Oh, Kenneth!" she repeated, in a tone of more confirmed reproach. Why could he not be romantic?

His reply was a thorough boy's reply. He slid his arm round her, and, finding scant resistance, drew her to him and kissed her.

Chiquita's heart was too full for her to expostulate. She could see him lying on that Chinese opium-eater's couch, mangled by the shell, with the tall man, a high naval officer, leaning over him.

He kissed her five or six times. She seemed to lose all thought of resistance after the first. Then he flew

upstairs to pack his things, humming, "We've got the ships, we've got the men," and brimming with excitement over war and its chances of distinction.

When he came down again she was giving instructions to her maid so important that she did not see him. She stopped almost guiltily when he spoke. He put it down to her sweetness of character. At such a moment she felt it unkind to be pre-occupied.

"Good-bye, again, Chiquita," he said; and this time she put her face up to his of her own accord and pressed his hand in silence.

Then he climbed up into the *riksha*, and, waving his hand, dashed off into the darkness.

An instant later the thick night was cloven with the sound of "Help, help!" and the noise of flying wheels.

It was Chiquita's voice.

He made his *riksha* boys turn and fly after it. He pulled off his overcoat and prepared to spring out and do battle with her assailants, but they knew the road better than his boys, who had come from Yokohama.

The chase grew long.

What on earth was he to do? If he abandoned Chiquita, what was there to save her? Lord Clapham had not come to the gate, and the servant who carried his kit-bag to the *riksha* went back the moment he had received his tip.

But he would miss his ship, when she had been warned for active service, and be cashiered and lose all these glorious chances.

An hour ago he might have hesitated. But Chiquita had rested in his arms and yielded herself to his kisses. She was now more than the mere woman in distress, whom the British sailor finds it so difficult to abandon. He flew on.

He could not hear a sound, but his boys, who had the keener ears and eyes of half-civilised people, maintained that they could hear the other *riksha* and that they had passed no turns. So he let them fly on, though every minute made the loss of his career more irrevocable.

They raced through the night. The sky whitened

behind the black plumes of the cryptomerias; the crows cawed; the hoopoe gave his queer call from the grove behind the red temple; and as they burst from a banked road into the open plain the rising sun fired the opposite mountains.

In the clear early morning he could see for miles along the road which crossed the flat like a pale ribbon. There was not a vehicle in sight. Had he had a pistol with him, Kenneth might have used it on himself. He swallowed the whole flask of whiskey which Chiquita had pressed on him as he said good-bye, and flung himself on the ground to try and sleep before he faced facts.

He did not know how long he slept, but when he woke Chiquita was at his side bending over him with her eyes full of tenderness.

He gathered that on the other side of the plain her captors had espied a police post and had hastily set her down, and that she had torn back in the hopes of meeting him before he gave up the chase. She could not tell him the motive of her capture, but the moment he had left the little gate, she had been dragged into a double *riksha*, drawn by two very swift runners, and already occupied by a Japanese, who held her in.

In spite of her safety, Kenneth was too dejected to say more than "Yes" or "No." Chiquita, half a foreigner, wholly irresponsible in her actions, could not understand how the gay, brave boy of yesterday had become the ghost of himself. She had anticipated a day of ecstatic happiness when she came upon him. Even yet, he told himself, if he could only have driven straight to the ship and urged his tired *riksha* boys to fresh speed with a doubled fare, he might be there before she weighed her anchor, but he could not leave Chiquita alone now any more than he could abandon her when she had raised that cry for help in the lonely night, and as there was only one *riksha*, she must ride and he must walk beside her. He never walked like that before. He was racing for his good name, racing against the charge of cowardice, racing to prevent the career, which was his one idea in life, being cut

off like a flower, racing to drown his thoughts, racing to make it impossible to speak—for though there was a great gladness in his heart to have saved her, he could not forgive her for being the innocent cause of his disgrace.

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The ship had sailed. He telegraphed to the Captain that he was following that evening in the *Kobe Maru*, a swift Japanese mail-steamer. That telegram took him all the money he had over from the passage, and he was too proud to borrow from Lord Clapham. To Chiquita he did not speak after they reached the Legation. At Hong-Kong he saw the smoke of the *Triptolemus* disappearing on the horizon.

He reported himself at the Admiralty; he was given a passage to Tientsin in a transport to report himself to his own Commander for orders. He began to hope as the transport trailed up the China coast.

The Legations at Pekin were expected to fall any day into the hands of a merciless Chinese mob. Every available ship had been sent up that its spare men might be drafted into a little expeditionary force, with which Sir Edward Seymour was going to make a dash to their rescue. Kenneth's heart sank again when he climbed the companion of the *Triptolemus* and faced the Commander. He could only tell his story blankly, and the Commander as blankly disbelieved him, and ordered him before a court-martial. The court-martial dismissed him from the ship, though every member of it sympathised with him—the issue was a technical one. He was cast on the streets of Tientsin, almost an outlaw, a man without an occupation, in a city full of British sailors about to march on a glorious, forlorn hope. The brother officers who had formed the court-martial had guessed that he was at the end of his money, and clubbed together to make a purse for him. They overcame his unwillingness to receive it by reminding him of the chances of war, and advised him

not to lose touch of their compradore in Tientsin, Ah Tun.

To Ah Tun he went to know where he could lay his head that night.

Ah Tun was a kindly man, who regarded the invasion of his country with absolute equanimity. China was to him a geographical expression. He was a Cantonese. Peking was merely a place to which taxes had to be paid. He was cheerfully doing his best to expedite the British advance. He considered Kenneth well out of such a foolhardy affair.

But Kenneth was not to be consoled, and poured out his griefs to the old Chinaman.

"You muchee wantee go?" he asked.

"I would sooner die than not go."

"Allee light; me see what me can do."

Poor Kenneth had little confidence in Ah Tun's ability to find him the means of throwing away the life he now hated, but any chance was better than none.

Only a matter of days ago it had been such a relief to him to discard his uniform for a tweed suit. He was out of uniform now, and would always have to be, and would have given the world for the right to put on his uniform again and fight shoulder to shoulder with the other *Triptolemusses*.

It was in this mood that he was dragging himself along the main street of Tientsin, when he felt a touch on his sleeve. It was Ah Tun, who signed to him to follow, and led him to the Japanese officer he had met at Lord Clapham's—he could never find out by what occult Asiatic telepathy Ah Tun was guided—the Chinaman was quite unknown to Captain Hidetomi, who greeted Kenneth cordially, and asked, "The English officers, do they even fight without their uniforms?"

He was so miserable that he poured out his woes into the sympathetic ears of the Japanese Captain. Hidetomi told him the story of the forty-seven Ronin, adding, "And now that you are a Ronin, you too wish to die?"

"Yes," cried Kenneth, with feverish anxiety.

"Listen," said Hidetomi. "My very tall officer is down with fever. To us Japanese it is the act of pity to give a man like you the ability to die. We have men on my ship who can make your smooth face a Japanese. Your uniform is the Japanese uniform if we change some stripes, then you can march in the contingent of Dai Nippon to Peking and choose your death."

In his awful rush to Tientsin and his subsequent disgrace, Kenneth did not know about the final arrangements for the relief of the Legation at Peking, how two thousand men of the picked bravest of the sailors of the nations were to march under the British Admiral, whose name was a proverb for high daring and resource. But only fifty-two Japanese sailors were to take part, so Kenneth found that he could not go. He came near to committing suicide at this fresh disappointment, but the longing to strike a blow for England was too strong, and if he could not fight in her own ranks it was something to fight with her allies, allies so close that they wore her very uniform with only a stripe or so to distinguish them. Sir Edward Seymour began his great march to Peking on the 10th of June, 1900, and Kenneth had to contain his soul in bitter suspense till the afternoon of the 16th, when the order came that the Allied Fleets which were bombarding the Taku forts were to land a storming party.

Once more Kenneth's luck was against him. The gallant Hidetomi had to stay in command of his ship, which was taking one of the leading parts in the bombardment. But he told his friend, Captain Hattori, Kenneth's story, and that chivalrous commander at once agreed to allow Kenneth to accompany him.

At dawn on the 17th the fire of the guns on the great north-west fort was sufficiently dominated, and the storming party swarmed to the attack. Side by side the British and the Italians led the assault, the other nations following. Poor Kenneth was reduced to abject misery at the Japanese being in the very rear of all, as they had artillery which kept them to the road while the others dashed across the swampy ground.

But the swamp was so heavy that before they reached the fort the Japanese began to overhaul them.

Kenneth's spirits rose as minute by minute the Japanese reached the very head of the column. The Chinese held their ground behind the strong walls of the fort, and threatened to sweep the Allies off the face of the marsh with the heaviness of their fusilade. A wild feeling of happiness seized Kenneth when the Japanese, scorning death, determined to attack the high-walled fort with their bayonets. All might be killed in the attempt; but if any reached the top they might quell the Chinese riflemen till the British came up. On they dashed, led by the brilliant and fearless Hattori in person. He was only a few yards from the parapet when he was shot down.

Kenneth sprang to the front, and, leaping on the crowd of murderous-looking Chinese, who stood a living rampart behind the breastwork, forced an opening by his weight and the fury of his attack, backed by a handful of the indomitable Japanese.

The Chinese riflemen fled; they dared not face the cold steel of the *Samurai*, though changed from sword to bayonet and borne by men in the uniforms of Europeans instead of the lacquered armour of old Japan.

Kenneth took the Japanese flag, which he seized from the hand of the dying Hattori, and swarmed up the flagstaff to fly the banner of the Rising Sun over the Taku forts. But a Chinese bullet struck him before he reached the top and brought him down with the awful thud made by a bear or panther when you shoot it up a tree and its claws relax and it rolls off the branch and strikes the ground of the forest. The next minute a British sailor carried the Union Jack to the top safely.

"Thank God!" cried the mangled Kenneth, forgetting that he was a Japanese, as he saw the old flag flying over the famous Taku forts instead of the adopted flag which he had lost his life in the attempt to hoist. Amphlett, the trim British lieutenant who a moment before had been charging at the head of his

stormers, looked at the Japanese officer lying on the ground, shot through the body, and so terribly mangled by his fall, and asked with British directness:

"Are you an Englishman?"

Smashed up as he was, Kenneth could still think enough to say, "No."

"What are you then?"

He gasped out the reply: "I was Rose of the *Triptolemus*."

"Oh, my God!" cried Amphlett. Then he called out to another British officer who was coming up. "Higgins, this is that poor chap Rose who was so badly treated on the *Triptolemus*."

Higgins was more practical. He examined Kenneth's wounds.

"He isn't dead," he said, "though I'm afraid he can't get over it. Here, some of you chaps, knock up a stretcher and carry him into a room."

No Chinese were left in the fort; they had fled helter-skelter before the Japanese bayonets, and there was every sort of accommodation. Kenneth was laid on a Chinese couch, with a noble marble bed and pillow roll, and a frame and legs of profusely carved black wood.

"We could do without some of these gew-gaws if we could get a pallet and a bolster instead, but the poor chap's so far gone that it doesn't matter much, if you roll up that bit of bunting and put it under his head. It was a spare Union Jack, brought in case the first was shot away. Kenneth's fast-glazing eyes gleamed as he recognised "the Rag."

"It's all right, old chap," said Higgins. "It's the proper stuff—it will do you as much good as any medicine." He stopped for fear he had spoken prophetically, and asked in a lower voice: "Aren't there any Trippers come up yet?" To the Fleet the *Triptolemusses* were the "Trippers," though they used the other name themselves.

Kenneth soon had shipmates by his side, who nursed him night and day. And he had such a splendid

constitution that he hung on though he had no desire to live. His unconsciousness kept him alive.

When at last he did come to, a tall thin man, with a dark grizzled beard and a small head, in which the high message of intellect and command was tempered by kindly grey eyes, stood at his bedside, dressed in khaki, stained with one of the sternest marches in history, *the march which failed*, the march to relieve the beleaguered Legations at Peking. He was an old friend of Kenneth's father, and called the boy by his Christian name.

"Yes, sir;" and a feeble motion hardly more than a shiver showed his impulse to salute the great Admiral, who still had his dusty scabbard and water-bottle and revolver-case strapped round his waist, showing that he had come straight to the boy's bedside when he arrived safe back himself.

"Dr. Knowles says you won't try to live. That won't do. You are wanted to fight for the Queen—we haven't a man to spare."

He saw the gleam he had aroused in Kenneth's eyes and the question it asked, and saying, "There's room on my staff for you," passed out. The Fleets of the nations were waiting for him.

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As nothing was too great, so nothing was too small for the Admiral. He was furious with the stupidity of the court-martial which had robbed the Fleet of a good officer for a technicality at such a time. But the Commander of the *Triptolemus* was one of the finest sailors in the Fleet, so with the tact which was as conspicuous in him as his naval skill, the Admiral begged the question by taking the boy on his own staff. The court martial had only dismissed him from his ship.

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There is an old saying, "While there is life there

is hope." It is sometimes as true to say, "While there is hope there is life."

Kenneth did not die, but, before he could recover from such injuries, the fighting for the Fleet was over, and he was sent to Japan, of all places, for his convalescence. It is the sanatorium of the Eastern Seas.

CHAPTER V

A YEAR had passed and left Chiquita desperately lonely. She saw nothing of Candida or the Sandys', and the door of Tiffanys, who might have been her port in the storm, was closed to her. For her escapade, which resulted in the cashiering of Kenneth, though he had been reinstated, had presented itself in the most odious light, and she was already very unpopular with the British community in Yokohama because she (and her uncle, too, in his weak-kneed philosophical-Radical way) was a pro-Boer.

No one could divine that she had tried to prevent Kenneth from joining his ship because she loved him; the possibility of it never occurred to them, since she had not known him for twenty-four hours when it happened.

They looked upon it as a conspiracy of an enemy of England to lure a British officer away from his duty, and the heinousness of the offence was exaggerated by her being an inmate of the household of the British Minister.

The British community at Yokohama is as patriotic as the Stock Exchange; it had been absorbingly interested in the fortunes of its country in the Boer War from the very commencement. It had proclaimed the mitigating circumstances which saved the honour of England in all the early disasters, and in the year of grace 1900, had celebrated with wild enthusiasm French's immortal gallop with his five thousand sabres, scattering the Boers to the winds from the siege of Kimberley; the surrender of the grim Cronje and all his army in the river-bed at Paardeburg; Dundonald and his Colonial troopers riding into Ladysmith; and the little grey Field-Marshal, who had once hurled an army across a desert on the astonished Afghans at Kandahar, without waiting to replace the provisions

of the lost convoy, driving the Boers before him headlong across both their countries and out of both their capitals over the Portuguese border at Coomatipoort.

It reminded them of the golden days of Sir Harry Parkes and his "*Civis Romanus sum.*" It made them sick that their country's representative should be ashamed of his country, and his niece should be a pro-Boer.

With the Tiffanys it was open war. Mrs. Tiffany would not have allowed Chiquita in her house, and Tiffany's office relations with his chief were very cold—but Tiffany had always done so little that Legation work did not suffer as it might have done.

I don't think Jevons was quite sound—but then, he was only half an Englishman. His utterances were most correct, for he took his cue from the Japanese, who found it impossible to contemplate the existence of such a thing as a pro-Boer. The feelings of a Japanese to his country are such that, if a Japanese equivalent of a pro-Boer was found, his own family would poison him, to avoid the disgrace of its becoming known. If Jevons had been a pro-Boer openly he might just as well have taken a ticket to Holland by the next steamer, for his well-earned influence with the Japanese would have vanished like a puff of dust, leaving a dirty impression behind.

It mattered not what Finch's opinions were—he had by this time sunk to insignificance in Oriental uxoriousness.

I do not mean to say that if Chiquita had gone to Yokohama to call on Candida or the Sandys' that she would have been refused permission to enter their houses, but she knew that she had alienated all their sympathies by her openly-expressed pleasure at the British ill successes.

The two people of her old set who were least changed to her were Rich and myself, because we only heard from others how badly she had behaved. She had not victimised us personally, probably because she expected us to care, and liked us well enough to restrain herself when she was with us. Of Rich she had seen very little for a long time past, because he spent so much

of his time at Yokohama, enjoying the society of Candida, while I had my work till late in the afternoon.

Chiquita, therefore, was thrown back on the society of globe-trotters, for which, fortunately, she had taken a fancy when she stayed with Candida at Yokohama. The British Embassy became quite hospitable to wanderers, who, most of them, commented on the bad management of the hostess in not bringing the junior members of the Legation into contact with their guests.

It was in this way that she met Lex Brema, an extremely pretty Dutch girl from the Transvaal, who brought an introduction from a pro-Boer member of Parliament who had been out in South Africa.

Lex was by no means prepared for the invitation for herself and her aunt to stay at the Legation which followed in a few days; she was a level-headed young woman, and experience had taught her that Radical M.P.'s were much freer about giving introductions than the people to whom the introductions were addressed were about acting on them.

Chiquita was really delighted to have Lex staying with her, for two reasons. Though she had not been able to restrain herself from uttering the anti-English sentiments which alienated Candida, she missed her horribly. The Legation was so lonely without a nice woman to keep her company. And then she had the positive pleasure, which she had not before enjoyed, of someone who would talk pro-Boerism with her and add up the sum of England's iniquities.

It must not be supposed that the two girls always talked politics—as a matter of fact, after the first few days, they hardly talked them at all, but just stamped upon England when the occasion served.

Lex was a merry, natural girl, who enjoyed the odd little things about Japan which I had taught Chiquita to observe, and in which she had proved a far apter pupil than she had at first promised. She had now learnt enough Japanese from me to talk with the people, and when she was lonely, spent her time in wandering into the servants' quarters of the Legation or into the humble Japanese houses, which abound even in Kojimachi, the court suburb. Her servants

were at first rather dismayed, for they were indulging in the Japanese weakness of quartering all their relations upon their employer, but when they found that Chiquita's view of her household was the more the merrier—she was tickled to death with their grandmothers and their grandchildren—they welcomed her.

Chiquita and Lex acquainted each other with their dislike to the English before they had met for five minutes. Chiquita only hated the English as a nation; Lex hated them nationally and individually, her hatred being fresher. But they never discovered the exact nature of their common ground of sympathy, which was that the Spaniard and the Dutchman played leading parts in the world till the Anglo-Saxon dispossessed them. The battle between themselves had been drawn to the bitter end, but they had gone down before the Anglo-Saxons of two hemispheres. Both of them also, in a minor degree, resented the progress in civilization thrust upon them by their conquerors.

Chiquita had not only asked Lex and her aunt to stay with her at the Legation, she had carried them on to Miyanoshita when Lord Clapham's household moved up there in the autumn. And it was at Miyanoshita now that the two girls were watching a sunset of unsurpassable glory.

There had been rain in the air; the rolling masses of clouds were swathed in crimson; there was anger as well as splendour in the heavens. All the earth was flooded with the red glare.

"Lex, look at that sunset!"

"I hate it!" she answered sullenly. "We Boers live in a sunset like that."

The crimson died away from the piled-up clouds and left a dull grey. When the girls looked up again all the clouds had rolled away, revealing a clear horizon of orange, which faded upwards into a tender greenish silver, the lining of dark clouds.

Lex had gone to Japan, after the war, to get away from the English. She had not been in the country twenty-four hours before she had marked in her Bible the plaint of Ahab to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" In her Naboth's vineyard—far-off

Japan—she found swarms of English merchants and travellers. The very railway tickets were in English as well as Japanese. She had to speak English to make herself understood. The cruellest stab was that the Japanese always called her English. They are apt to call anyone who has a white skin English; and anywhere Lex would have been taken for the prettiest type of Englishwoman, with her short, straight nose, her brilliant fairness, her lovely womanly mouth, and her firm, well-cut chin.

Only Chiquita, whom she took to her wounded heart, knew the love latent in her dark blue eyes, and how the beauty of her face was doubled when she laughed out and showed her perfect teeth. London would not have believed that a Dutch girl could be so elegant. Her animation in Tokyo society had taken the form of sarcasm and invective against the English. She hated the Japanese even worse, for they were full of pride at the negotiations which were in progress for alliance with the English. Unfortunately, she was technically English, since the men of her family had taken the oath of allegiance after fighting like heroes. Lex had been with them on commando, and there had been no better or more popular nurse among the Dutch ladies who did hospital work.

Lord Clapham should not have been away from Tokyo, for Germany was believed to be meditating a coup in the Far East. But all European Japan loves, when it can, to go to Miyanoshita for the warm weather.

Its airy hills, with their view of Fujiyama; its deep-wooded valleys, with vistas of the sea, make it the ideal place for picnics. Chiquita wanted to go there. Her uncle would have been content to stay in his library at the Legation at Tokyo. He was the kind of Englishman who becomes a vegetable in Japan. But Chiquita loved *al fresco* entertainments, and at Miyanoshita there were always some nice globe-trotters. Her uncle was ready to make acquaintances, when she allowed him.

Lex was in a bad temper; her Elijah had just made his appearance. It made no difference that he looked well-bred, frank, and generous. The yellow African

sunburn and fever tinge stamped him an invalided British officer; and Lex detested British officers, especially if they looked chivalrous. It was bad enough that they had conquered the Boers in battle, but that they had won, in spite of quixotic generosity, made her burn with mortification. She was the soul of honour, and hated that her countrymen should have been found inferior to the English in fair play.

At that moment a high Japanese official, who had gone to Miyanoshita with Lord Clapham and his household to observe what people in good English society did, was introduced to Lex. He spoke fluent but fancy English, and, when he learned where she had come from, said, "Madame, I must congratulate you. You now belong to the great *Umpire* which is to be our esteemed ally."

"My country has the misfortune to be in the hands of England; but I shall never belong to England. I left my country so as not to take the oath."

The Japanese put on the inscrutable expression in which his countrymen take refuge from facts, and addressed himself to Chiquita.

Lord Clapham was speaking to the invalided officer. He had a philosophic mind, and expected his country to be in the wrong; but he had a son as dashing and courageous as Chiquita, who was in the Guards, and had won mention in some of the most deadly battles of the war. Blood is thicker than water—even than watery philosophy. Nothing had ever brought emotion to Lord Clapham's dull veins like those letters from the Honourable Thomas Cobbe, describing his battles in the language of sport. He introduced himself to the wounded officer as the father of another South African soldier, though he had originally consented to his son going into the Coldstreams only because he did not look on the Guards as soldiers at all. Chiquita did not generally approve of her uncle introducing himself, except at her instigation. But the charm of Frank Allward's disposition was written in his face. So when a German Serene Highness of the military pattern came up to talk to Lex, Chiquita joined her uncle, and was interested to learn that the stranger

was the Captain Allward who was already the most popular Englishman in Japan. He was a "Gunner," who had fought through the war and had been left for dead in the latest victory. He had been sent for a long sea voyage to recover from his wounds.

Chiquita was a pro-Boer. Belonging to a little nation, she resented the masterfulness of the English. But she liked individual Englishmen, and she could be charming to an invalid until he fell in love with her: she even allowed that in some cases.

Besides, she was having a new experience. Lex's petulant prettiness was most alluring to the sons of men; and Lex had the grace of femininity. Chiquita's crown was in danger. The Serene Highness led the way; he was Lex's devoted slave, and she encouraged him. It was this daughter of a dead republic's first Serene Highness; it gave her the pride of conquest and the opportunity of snubbing her English admirers.

He was a fine man, a little extravagantly proud of his position and the German Army, but seemingly very courteous and noble.

Chiquita, therefore, welcomed the apparition of Captain Allward, undoubtedly the more attractive man personally, and the hero of the moment in Japan. She made a friendly little speech to him of being proud to welcome to the British Legation such a distinguished man, and invited him to accompany herself and Miss Brema and the Prince to a picnic they were contemplating on the following day.

Allward, who was progressing with his convalescence and did not expect any very serious exertions in a picnic with a woman like Chiquita in such a lazy place as Japan, was delighted to consent, and told himself that his stay at Miyanoshita was going to turn out much less dull than he had anticipated. Being the kind of Englishman who feels that a person's looks are their own and that anyone who examines them is taking a liberty, he had not noticed either Chiquita or Lex till the former spoke to him; indeed he was ignorant of the appearance of Lex until she came out of the hotel to start for the picnic.

He had felt that Chiquita was pretty enough, and

as *chic* as any man could desire. But when he saw Lex the consideration of *chic*-ness disappeared; not that she was without it, but that extrinsic features such as fashions and arts were merged in an irresistible femininity. Lex had the alluring grace of Mother Eve, tempered with an adorable petulance, at all events, towards the English, the hereditary enemies of her race.

The moment that Allward saw her he recognised the presence of the enemy. Soldier-like, he concentrated his attention; he saw that the enemy was beautiful, and that if her resistance could only be conquered, she would be generous. It was natural for him to be interested in a Boer against whom he had so lately been in arms.

Lex was up in arms the moment Chiquita introduced him to her. She could barely be civil to him, and at once showed her intention of being monopolised by the happy Prince.

In any case, Allward would have devoted himself to Chiquita as at once his hostess of the day and the lady who presided over the Legation of his country.

The favourite way to picnic at Miyanoshita is to take a chair, or ride, or even walk over the great mountain called Oji Goku or Big Hell, to the blue Hakone Lake with the sacred and exquisitely beautiful volcano of Fujiyama reflected in its waters; the fairy-like village and noble temple named after the lake; the tombs of the Kill-Dragon men; the colossal image of Jizo Sama carved out of the living rock; and the famous mineral baths of Ashinoyu.

The chair in which you are carried bears no resemblance to the domestic or Bath variety; it is more like the sedan chair with its top off; and still more like a child's nursery chair with a stout pole running along each side of it to go on the bearers' shoulders.

Chiquita had one waiting for her with two stout Japanese coolies to carry it, while Lex came out prepared to ride, with a shawl arranged over her skirt like a habit in the useful Japanese picnic fashion, so that she could walk without being inconvenienced if she felt inclined.

"Now, Captain Allward, where's your chair?" said Chiquita, making a joke of it, but hoping that he would take the hint.

"Oh, the Prince and I are going to walk." The Prince was a very good walker; he was the president of an Alpine touring club.

"You must not be so foolish; it will be far too much for you."

"My dear Miss Palafox, I did some tremendous marching in Africa."

"Yes, but that was before you were wounded. At any rate, you ought to have a chair or a pony to pick you up if you are tired—you really ought."

Allward would not be convinced; he could not stand the idea of an English soldier having to be carried in a chair in the presence of a German soldier, who was walking. He felt so much better.

"Oh, I don't want a chair," he said. "I shouldn't use it if I had it. These Japs will never take you two abreast, and I want to talk to you as we go along."

This was what Chiquita wanted, so she did not press her persuasions further. If he felt really bad, she said to herself, she could let him have hers, which would have been a very great sacrifice if it had ever come off.

The luncheon basket was slung behind her chair.

Lex rode her Japanese pony, a regular little Boer pony, a few yards in front, with the Prince walking beside her.

One of Chiquita's chief charms was that she had no more consciousness (or conscience) than a kitten. She half forgot the person she was with, and gambolled like a young animal. Though she was so *blasée* about the greater things of life, she was as easily amused as a child about trifles. As they passed through the wood she was constantly stopping her chair to kodak the old women wood-cutters, bent almost double under the huge faggots which they carry on their backs, with frames such as glaziers use in England. She gave them all more money than they earned in a day for having their photographs taken, and as soon as they were out of sight imitated their puzzled monkey faces to make her bearers laugh.

And, higher up the mountain, where there were mud-springs with only a thin crust over the boiling mud except where the path ran, she lured Allward over a treacherous piece to see him scald his feet—she took care that it was not a very bad piece, but a bit that the natives used for such tricks. It only added another touch of intimacy to their acquaintance.

She was just the laughing, spirited sort of companion who makes a walk so delightful for a young soldier on a holiday.

Their shouting and laughter was in marked contrast to the mood in which the Prince escorted Lex. He was an enthusiastic Alpinist, and poetized in the most romantic German vein about the beauty of the gorge of Miyanoshita, stretching its arms towards the sea, and gushed about the rose-red wild azaleas, the thickets of bamboos waving in the wind, and the sadness of the dark camellia trees.

The veldt had given Lex a love of sweeping views; the luxurious vegetation of Japan was a feast after the sun-baked rocks of the Transvaal, and, when they reached the top of Oji Goku, Lex's face beamed, for there he pointed out the matchless Fujiyama, with its snow-cap mirrored in the blue Hakone Lake.

The Prince compared it to Mount Etna, which, like so many German Alpinists, he had ascended, and dilated with real erudition and eloquence on the customs of mountain pilgrimages.

Even Chiquita listened, inspired with his poetic fervour. Allward was rather interested; he was no fool, but he would have preferred the eloquence shorter, if it had not given him the opportunity of watching the two women without being rude.

Chiquita had to the full the lazy tolerance of the Southern races, which allows them to sit with folded hands while some interminable performance is going on, whose futility would kill an Englishman with *ennui*. Her real interest soon died out, but she went on enduring it contentedly with eyes fixed on the speaker graciously.

Lex, on the other hand, was drinking in every word he said with deep appreciation, so absorbed that she

forgot to throw out her outposts against the enemy. Allward had, therefore, the opportunity of seeing what a gracious unaffected woman she really was, and how full of feminine softness.

In his African campaign he had admired some of the Boer women very much, both for their physical perfection and for their spirit and sincerity; but Lex, he thought, easily excelled them all. Her colouring was so dazzlingly fair, and with all her alluringness she had a restive modesty which is rare in her countrywomen, and was peculiarly attractive to him. It was the absence of reserve which spoilt Chiquita to him; her very ease would have made him ill at ease on any occasion except a picnic or a party.

They took their tiffin (lunch) in a quaint tea-house built across the waterfall. *Moosmes*, in scarlet kirtles, with flowers in their glossy black hair, knelt before them, with the five cups of "honourable tea," which none of them touched, though they gave a profuse *chadai*—tea-money—the *baksheesh* of Japan; while Chiquita's bearers unpacked from the basket the joys of a Japanese picnic—snowy linen, and an amazing assortment of food packed in separate white wooden boxes. Food-boxes are the feature of Japan. When a Japanese gives a banquet at a tea-house, the unconsumed dishes are packed for him to take away. Chiquita was assiduous, even solicitous, about the convalescing soldier's lunch. He needed it; the walk was too severe in the burning sun of April. She saw how tired he was, and took him to a cooler spot. He felt a pang as he saw Lex abandoning herself to the enchantment of the day under a pale pink Japanese parasol. She had felt the heat hardly more than Chiquita in her chair. Chiquita was sweet and thoughtful, a mood in which she lavished Southern graciousness.

Tiffin over, they rode down to the lake. It was a piece of Fairyland; but the enchanted village of Hakone, with its thatched roofs and its noble temple and mossy terraces of age-mellowed stone, was on the other side, and there was no boatman for the sampans. This decided Chiquita to cross the lake. She sent the

pony and the chair back; the Prince and Allward were to work the *yulo* (gondola oar) of the sampan.

"Can you row?" she asked the Prince.

"Indeed, Madame, I have never tried."

"Can you row, Captain Allward?"

"Oh, yes; but I have never tried in one of these things." He did not add that he was forbidden all violent exertion. Propelling a boat with a *yulo* is a most trying exercise to an unpractised hand. The boat crawled across the lake. Great beads of sweat started from his forehead. Lex said, quite kindly: "You row, your Highness; Captain Allward is so tired."

It was a bitter confession for Frank Allward, who, until pulled down with wounds and enteric, had had more than his share of the English country gentleman's skill and endurance in sports. The Prince had been watching Allward with the view of relieving him; had even noticed how it seemed easier to manage the *yulo*. The sampan made much better pace; he was a big, strong man, and not having been invalided, was able to put his back into it. Chiquita was penitent for having made Captain Allward take exercise which he should not have taken; but her almost caressing solicitude did not draw out the sting of cutting a sorry figure before Lex. He had said he could row, and the Prince had confessed that he had never tried.

When they landed at the famous tea-house built over the water, as fantastic as a willow-pattern plate, they found that the *betto* with the pony, and the boys with the chair, had run all round, so that the ladies might not have to walk home from Hakone. Lex insisted on Allward taking the pony. It played her game. She was sorry for his physical weakness; it made this big English soldier look like an invalid, to take a lady's pony; and it gave the Prince an opportunity of lavishing attentions on her and congratulating her on her powers as a pedestrian, which were considerable. She was splendidly healthy, and would not have taken the pony if it had not reminded her of a Boer mount.

What a walk she had along that wonderful mountain path, which began in the grounds of a stately temple

and passed under tall torii, those mystic arches of Japan, up stairways of crumbling stone, through sacred groves, and so round the mountain shoulder.

With German thoroughness, the Prince gave her a scholar's explanation of the old stone tombs figuring the five elements, under which lay the men who had freed the land from the dragon far back in the Middle Ages. He pointed out that tombs almost exactly parallel are to be found in the Etruscan Museum at Florence. And when they came to the gigantic image of Jizo carved out of the rock, with a face of calm beauty breathing the peace of God, he discussed the attempts made to identify Jizo with the Founder of Christianity, and told how Marco Polo had found a place in the Buddhist Pantheon.

Allward rode behind Chiquita—Japanese paths do not let two ride abreast. He could not see Lex, but he pictured her growing softness as she grew more tired and fuller of Fairyland. It was worse than watching her and the Prince in the morning. This lovely woman, glowing with prettiness and personality, was passing from him by leaps and bounds. He was not single in his consciousness of failure. Want of intuition was not a weakness of Chiquita's—she read his heart.

The sun sank as they passed the reedy pools of the Healing Waters of Ashinoyu; his last hues left the sky as they swung down the village of Miyanoshita, trying not to see the *jinriksha* boys taking baths under the leaks in the bamboo pipes, which carried the boiling sulphur water from the bowels of the mountain of Hell to the hotel bath-rooms.

In its place came the soft grey light, which people learn to love in hot climates, the time when all the world goes out to breathe, and the poor Japanese who, like the poor Italian, is accustomed to use the street for his sitting-room, finds his parlour ready. The natives were squatting on their door-steps; the foreigners were standing about in little groups, chatting, watching the various parties returning from their expeditions, or strolling down the village street to shop.

As Allward dismounted, Lex came up to him, and with much more kindness than she had ever permitted herself to assume before, asked him how he was. He almost resented it, though he was touched with the half-childish, half-affectionate solicitude with which Chiquita, in spite of his indifference to her attractions, had insisted on accompanying him to his room and staying by the door till the servants answered his bell and set about preparing one of the boiling hot baths which are the Japanese panacea for all sorts of seizures.

He certainly felt much better, when he had been for ten minutes in the deep wooden box, sunk in the floor, which constitutes the famous bath of Miyanoshita.

CHAPTER VI

LORD CLAPHAM—at Chiquita's instigation, of course—invited Allward to take his meals at their table.

Allward at first excused himself; he was obliged to take special diet while he was convalescing from his wounds, but Chiquita pricked up her ears at the mention of this, and insisted that if he was dieting he would be much the better for sitting at a table where there was a woman to keep the food up to the mark, meaning herself; she was sure to give it minute attention. The small things of life interested her so much more than the large ones. She rather monopolized the pleasant invalid with her care for his health. But the ladies saw nothing of him after dinner, for Lord Clapham thought that what he needed was quiet, and probably a whiskey and soda, so after dinner he led him to the large room improvised out of two or three Japanese rooms to act as his study, if any business should turn up while he was at Miyanoshita. Angles were left jutting out where folding doors had been discarded.

Allward pushed an easy chair into one of these angles, where he would be shaded from the light; a snooze would do him good. He soon dropped off. But the instincts which had been quickened in him during the war were not dead. Presently he woke without stirring, as men do who have been waking for months in the atmosphere of danger.

There was someone moving round the room. It was not Lord Clapham, for though he was tall, there was light enough to show that he had no beard.

Soon he made out Prince Adolf. He was hunting for something, high and low, and last of all carried

the light into the room where Allward was. He went on hunting for a minute or two before he noticed Allward sitting back in the angle to shade his eyes from the light. He gave a perceptible start, and asked, "Have you seen my pipe?"

Allward did not pause to reflect whether he had ever seen the Prince with a pipe; and he attached no importance to the start. It seemed natural under the circumstances.

"Won't a cigarette do?" he asked, pulling out a well-browned leather case and offering it to the Prince.

"For the smoke, perfectly. If you are too waked up to go to sleep again may I take it beside you? I will look for the pipe presently—it is an old friend; I value it."

He was soon paying adroit compliments in fluent English on the handling of the British artillery in the war, though he said that their guns were not good enough. He had been attached to one of our armies, and struck Allward as "a very good chap."

That talk brought them nearer to each other. They smoked together at night, and joined in a *partie carrée* with Chiquita and Lex for strolls in the exquisite early mornings or the hour of the sunset, which has no treachery in Japan. Those walks were all that Allward could manage now; he sat in the shade through the day. He had suffered a severe relapse and had to be very careful about over-exerting himself, though the spring air of Miyanoshita was a wonderful tonic. In the morning they walked quietly down the glen below the hotel by short zig-zag paths, which led through deep woods to delightful waterfalls and the queer Japanese village, whose steep thatched roofs might have been carved like netsukes.

This was Lex's favourite walk; the two couples became separated by the hundred turns. It might have been Allward's, too, if he had had Lex for a companion. He could hear her when she was with Prince Adolf, laughing like the gay little waterfalls which they kept passing, but with him she was only a kind woman helping an invalid, and when Chiquita

found that his heart was Lex's she was no better. As soon as she ceased laying herself out for him—he saw her in her true colours. She did not care for walking, or the country, until they arrived at a village; there were none of the oddities of Japanese life to amuse her. Chiquita could always be a kitten when she had poor Japanese to make her laugh. To the day that she had left the Legation she regarded all they did in their ordinary occupations as tricks.

The evenings were better, for when they took their strolls into the town he had more of Lex. Chiquita, who took hardly any interest in the beautiful ancient curios with which Japan abounds, showed a common weakness with the Prince in buying the woodware of Miyanoshta — cabinets, writing-cases, nests of pill-boxes, folding footstools—everything inlaid with wood mosaics like glorified cribbage-boards. The Prince honestly thought them beautiful, and Chiquita loved squatting like a native in the queer little houses where the ware was made and sold, cracking jokes in broken Japanese.

She made the Prince try to squat too. She shrieked with laughter at his unsuccessful efforts. Being a big, strong, stiff-jointed, rather stoutly-made man, it was torture to him.

Lex had no bump for collecting. She and Allward simply sat outside and rested. She was vexed at the way the smart Englishwomen in the Legation Set buzzed round the Captain, if they happened to be strolling in his neighbourhood.

The Englishwomen—God bless them!—saw something in this pallid invalid which she did not; a big man, brown from his khaki helmet to his long brown boots, brownest of all in the face, galloping across the open veldt, with the gallant teams of his fifteen-pounders snorting and rattling their chains and flinging up the dust in the desultory hail of aimed bullets. They saw them wheel round and stop and unlimber. Then the long muzzles went up, and though the brown men behind the guns were falling like leaves in a gale, came the sights, the sounds, the smells your true man

loves; above all, the flames which darted like serpents' tongues from the mouths of the guns answering to other tongues of fire from the mountains in front till there were no more to answer, though the hail from hidden rifles on the kopjes went on sweeping the men from the guns, the tall captain himself not last, till a thin line of bayonets reached the kopjes, and the men who had gone on slaying till the steel was at their breasts threw down their arms and were safe. The boy-subaltern, who should still have been at school, gave his orders for tending the wounded, and harnessing the proud guns, to march them back from victory. Then he covered the face of his dead captain with tears and kisses before he left him to be buried by the Mounted Infantry.

But he was not dead. The news of his marvellous recovery was copied from paper to paper, till there was hardly an Englishman in Japan who did not know his story.

Lex knew it too, though she said nothing to admit it. She was quite kind now, except when her prejudices were ablaze, but her reserve was most marked except over his health, where her knowledge as a nurse made her anxious. She never allowed conversations to become personal and never unbent, though she was animation personified when the Prince was explaining Japan. It may be urged in her defence that she might be his Princess if she chose to set her cap at him. He very nearly disliked Chiquita, who was unimpressed by his rank or his cleverness or his fine person, and whom he suspected of a desire to force him to do things which made his very bigness look ridiculous, such as taking off his boots and squatting on his heels in Japanese houses, or being taught the Jujitsu wrestling by a tiny Japanese, who threw him about the room like a piece of cork.

When he offered his heart and his title to Lex the merriment died out of her eyes.

"I don't—I can't love you," she said.

"But, Lexchen, you may grow to it," he urged. She shook her head sadly.

"Is there another?" he asked with dignity.

"Yes, but I shall never marry him."

"Then marry me," he cried cheerfully, "and trust to love coming afterwards." He had made up his mind after proper consideration and was not to be deterred by trifles.

The House of Borussia had often married without love and enjoyed sufficient happiness afterwards.

Lex was practical. With her fortune, upon which he was probably well informed, they would not be pinched by the poverty of German princelets. His position was already splendid; his ability and prepossessing personality made him sure of advancement in the Prussian Service. She liked him, and if ever the time came for the Dutch in South Africa to fight to regain their nationality, he might be the Lafayette of the war. So, reiterating that she did not love him, she promised.

It was not long before everybody knew it, and that it had been arranged that Lex and her aunt should follow him to the German Legation at Peking. His uncle was in the Diplomatic Service there; he was to leave Japan almost immediately, and the invitation was to be telegraphed from Peking. The aunt was a gossip, and enjoyed painting up the details.

Ill news travels fast. Allward was one of the first to hear it, and that from her own lips. She told him plainly, almost cruelly, that his company would not be welcome any more except in the presence of a third person, because she had promised to marry Prince Adolf of Borussia.

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That night Allward was unable to sleep. There was a magnetic wave, of a kind which we do not perfectly understand, though scientific men would never dream now of dismissing it unceremoniously, bringing to his

brain a presentiment of impending evil. It might be with regard to Lex—he put her first—or it might be to his health, or it might be only to the household. His brain was as active as a sentry's. He tossed and tossed, and felt as if he should never sleep again, as he lay there. But he thought that if he put on a dressing-gown and took a rug for his knees and lit a candle and a cigarette, he might be able to read himself to sleep in his armchair in Lord Clapham's study. He knew that he should find the candle just where he had blown it out when he got up to go to bed, and he had left a box of matches beside it. So he never thought of taking a light. Campaigning had taught him to move about in the dark, and to remember the position of the furniture. There would be room to pass between Lord Clapham's desk and the table where his secretary wrote.

His calculations were correct. He touched nothing till he reached that—and then he walked dead into something.

What could it be? He could remember nothing!

It was the back of a stooping man.

Allward did not realize this till the man turned, revealing a small search lantern hooked into his waistcoat.

Quick as thought Allward flung the rug he was carrying over the thief's head and arms. In his weak state it was his only chance.

As his adversary struggled to disentangle himself, he threw his arms round him with locked hands.

If he had been in health his adversary would have been at his mercy. As it was, he could hold him for a time, unless the exertion started his wounds. But how was it to end?

His English instincts rebelled against shouting for help. The lock was good, but he was growing faint from weakness. He would have to shout.

The end came first. He knocked over the Secretary's lamp and the crash roused the Japanese servants,

who came running in with oiled paper lanterns, followed by the manager with an acetylene flare.

Allward released his hold. The rug fell to the ground, and with it a book, which his practised military eye recognised as a British Government Cypher. The drawer of Lord Clapham's writing-table was open, his adversary was the German Prince. He seized hold of the book, which meant nothing to the Japanese, and thrust it into his pocket. The German started for the door. The servants, with Oriental quickness, anticipated him. But Allward waved them aside. It was only a fight between—two *gentlemen*, he was going to say, but the word stuck in his throat—between two foreigners. Would they . . . ?

He pushed the drawer to, and as the snaplock clicked, fell heavily to the ground. The lynx-eyed Japanese saw a trickle of blood, and flew for Lord Clapham. Lord Clapham was helpless in an emergency and went to rouse Chiquita. Chiquita was by his side like a flash of lightning. She did not wring her hands and shriek like a Spaniard, but for once she owned herself absolutely beaten. She could only think of whiskey, and sent the landlord flying for it.

She took his head on her lap, and with great gentleness and skill managed to force a little down his throat. Her heart throbbed. He was just beginning to open his eyes, when she felt a firm hand on her shoulder. It was Lex, roused by the tramping of so many feet in the night.

"Make them carry him to my room, Miss Palafox; my surgical case is there—quick! quick! Tell them in Japanese—there is no time to be lost."

They laid him on her bed. She stripped him hastily. She did not believe that any living man could have carried so many wounds. Fortunately only one, and that not important, had broken out afresh. Captain Allward had fainted from exertion. But though there was no deadly hæmorrhage she dreaded the after-effects of such a terrible shock to his system.

Presently he opened his eyes again. He thought he was dreaming; for Lex Brema, a white-robed figure,

was beside him, with long golden hair loose on her shoulders.

"Go to sleep, Captain Allward, I entreat you," she said, bending over him with the gentle smile and gentle hand with which nurses compel obedience.

"Whiskey," he raved, "whiskey!"

"No, no; it's bad for you," she said. She would not have thought from his appearance that Allward was one of those men who are so accustomed to taking pegs of whiskey as to call for it at such a moment. She felt quite cross with him.

"Whisk — whisk — I must." He dragged it out syllable by syllable; "dying—something—say—"

"No you're not dying," she said, forcing a little laugh she did not feel, to restore his confidence. "Take this."

She gave him a strong restorative. Agitation was so bad for him.

"My dressing-gown." It was with great difficulty that he managed to get out the words.

"Here it is," she said, holding it up before him.

"The pocket," he gasped. He was too feeble to examine it for himself. She felt in it for him.

"There is a book," she said.

"Give it me, please." He regained coherence with an effort, and continued: "The British Cypher—somebody trying—steal it—I stopped him—get it back Lord Clapham—nobody know—"

Chiquita's Japanese maid O-hana was kneeling outside the door. Lex sent her flying to her mistress. Chiquita was with them in a flash. She had not gone to bed again.

She bent over the wounded man with the heavenly smile which stole out of her hard little heart when it was touched.

At that moment he might have won it if he could have raised his little finger.

"I took this cypher," she said, putting her lips to his ear, "to keep it safe. I am prepared to swear to it. It is not safe down there. Something made me

remember my burglary. Good - night, good rest, Chevalier Bayard."

Chiquita had formed her own conclusions about the occurrence, and she had intuitions. But whatever they were she carried them to bed with her, for she remembered Lex's engagement.

CHAPTER VII

IT was not surprising that the Prince left Miyanoshita long before the other Europeans were up, and lost no time in joining his uncle in Pekin. On his voyage from Yokohama to Kobe, from which it was posted, he wrote Lex a long and charming letter about her and her aunt joining him in China. It was rather a sarcasm, as they were both such good linguists, that English should have been the language which suggested itself for the letter, since hostility to England was the common ground which had brought about their engagement.

But in the notes which had passed between them in those golden days of Miyanoshita he had noticed that his handwriting in German often puzzled her. He told her how sorry he was to have left Miyanoshita without taking a lover's leave, but State reasons had forced him to hurry from Japan at an hour's notice.

Lex was by constitution loyal. Her bitter hostility to England was the fruit of her loyalty to the quarrelsome little Republic which was no more. She thought no evil.

To the present situation she settled easily. She had so often sat up with her wounded countrymen during the war. She sat with her eyes resting on Allward after she had told O-hana to fetch her quilt and wooden pillow and go to bed.

She wanted to think. Oh, what queer turns there were in Fortune's wheel—the long romantic days in the glen which she had pictured with her German lover, where were they? She had given up her own bed to his enemy—she could not help regarding Allward

as his enemy, though she knew no reason, for she had not yet learned who was the assailant who had so nearly brought about the Englishman's death.

She had to win the enemy back to life. He needed nursing through this shock, and the constant check of a nurse afterwards. A few more of these episodes, and Ralph Allward's high soul would join the souls of brother officers buried in their boots where they had commanded their unsunderable guns.

Here was her duty—here was her chance. There might not be one other white nurse in Japan. The time had at least come for her to diminish that galling debt of magnanimity. She felt that she could not join her lover till she had given this Englishman his life.

She gave it. With Lex at his side he had no further thought of dying. It was a pleasure to obey her commands, and she was a strict nurse.

Bit by bit she caught the malady of nurses—a more than professional interest in her charge. One cruel day in the first week he was on the edge of the black water—it needed but a slip for him to have sunk for evermore.

She heard a faint voice call "Lex!" He had never spoken her name before—it told her of a crisis, and she came to him very quickly.

"It is all over, Lex—won't you make peace between Boer and Briton, before I go out——?"

She took a steady look at him, and horror seized her that he should be dying, far from his friends, in Japan, instead of with the kisses and tears of the boy-subaltern on his face beside those valiant guns.

"You shan't die, you shan't die!" she cried, kneeling beside him with her arms round him and giving him soft wooing kisses—a Lex he had never seen; and an overmastering desire to live turned back the waters of death.

Lex's affection and care completely restored him, and soon he was well, and that other end had come.

The Prince's uncle's invitation had been telegraphed, but Lex was conscious that Peking would be exile. She had been taking increasing walks down the glen beside

her patient, with her whole mind riveted upon him. She knew his soul as well as the body which she had nursed back to health. In body and soul she had found no single blemish but the wounds dealt by her countrymen.

Chiquita found her in her room, not to be recognised for the same Lex, prostrate with dejection.

"Oh, what am I to do?" she cried, handing over the telegram. "I have promised to marry the Prince, and——" she stumbled for words.

"You need not say it," replied Chiquita. "As my people say, I do not want eyes in the back of my head to know your secret. Why have you been so long in finding it out yourself?"

"But what shall I write to the Prince?"

"Tell him that you cannot marry a thief."

"What!" she shrieked.

"Haven't you guessed what nearly cost your lover his life?"

"Miss Palafox, how dare you?"

"Well, I'll put it more mildly. Your Prince—not your lover"—Lex was about to expostulate but restrained herself—"was trying to possess himself of the cypher of the British Government. Captain Allward came upon him just as he had helped himself to it. That was the book which——"

"The book which he gave you!"

"The book he gave me to sneak back into Uncle's drawer so that——"

"So that what?"

"——So that the world might never know that Prince Adolf of Borussia could not draw the line between picking and stealing."

"Why should he have spared him?"

"You have no eyes at the back of your head, Lex!"

When Chiquita left her, Lex seized her blotting-pad and wrote out in feverish haste a telegram and went to find Allward. He was sitting with Candida Begg in a verandah full of other English people when she came upon him, her fair cheeks radiant with excitement, and

her eyes and cheeks all smiles. She held out a folded paper.

He sprang to his feet and went to her.

With a lovely blush she asked:

"Will you send this telegram for me, Captain Allward?"

"Delighted," he replied in the stereotyped way, but meaning it from the bottom of his heart.

"Promise me not to look at it till you hand it in?"

He promised.

When he read it he staggered. He was thankful that the telegraph operator was an absurd-looking Japanese instead of one of those dainty women clerks who receive these appointments in England for their looks.

The message ran:

"Prince Adolf of Borussia, German Legation, Peking, China. I cannot marry a thief!—BREMA."

Allward did not show, in piecing together a woman's attitudes, the same quickness as he had shown in piecing together military intelligence. But he was not quite blind, and he happened to notice that Lex had her hat and her boots on when she called him away from speaking to other people just to carry a telegram a hundred yards.

When he came out, she was talking to Candida Begg, one of the group he had just left. This also was manna in the wilderness, for Candida belonged to the anti-Boer party. She had come up from Yokohama with Rich. They had grown into the habit of taking trips together and staying in the same hotel without anyone imputing scandal. It was recognised that they were friends, the best of friends, and nothing more, though they kept very much to themselves on these occasions, going for long walks or rides all day, and retiring to their private sitting-room after dinner.

When they saw Captain Allward emerge from the

telegraph office, Lex beat a retreat into the house, and Candida, who had met the soldier a good deal in Yokohama, gave him a friendly nod and prepared to rejoin her friends. But noticing the look of despondency which had settled on his face, she came forward to shake hands with him, and take the opportunity of saying, in a voice which could not be overheard:

"I think Miss Brema's gone inside to wait for you."

She smiled softly to herself as she said "I think." She had never felt more certain of anything in her life.

She smiled further at the quickness with which the wounded man disappeared into the house after Lex. He just caught sight of Lex at the end of the corridor which led to Lord Clapham's suite, and followed her.

She went into the little morning-room with a view over the glen, which she shared with Chiquita.

Chiquita was there.

Now, Chiquita could be generous about giving presents and in other money matters, but she had never been generous over men. If a man was nice she did her best to annex him, and with her advantages of looks and position she seldom failed.

But this man was an exception, and though Chiquita would probably have refused him, like all the rest, when he asked her to marry him, she had courted his society and his admiration.

In affairs of the heart she had the quickness of her race. She knew at a glance why Lex had tamely allowed herself to be followed into the room, taking the chance of its being empty, and she was very mischievous as well as a woman scorned. But she, too, like Candida, saw what was written in his face, and after a momentary struggle with herself, she decided to surrender. But she could not resist the sarcasm of a ridiculous lie.

"My uncle wants me," she said.

It was not easy to contemplate Lord Clapham venturing to make such a demand at Miyanoshita, and still less easy to imagine Chiquita paying any attention to it unless she chose to.

With this she fled incontinently.

The perversity of women is such that Lex felt compelled to run after her and beg her not to consider herself *de trop*. But she was taken prisoner at the door, and marched back with her wrists in one of Allward's big, strong hands. She did not attempt to withdraw her hands, but surrendered at discretion.

CHAPTER VIII

BRITISH society in Japan had changed more slowly than usual during the eventful reign of Lord Clapham at the British Legation, which was itself unusually prolonged. It was a cruel sarcasm of Fate to send him to Japan during such a decade. When he accepted the appointment he expected it to be as dull as Learned Societies. But Captain and Mrs. Allward had gone home quietly, directly after their marriage, and lately Tiffany had succeeded to the ancestral honours and become Lord Bunbury. Finch had torn himself away from a gallery of Japanese wives sometime since, and been appointed to Washington, where his really fine Japanese collection made him a person of artistic distinction, and he had the immense satisfaction of taking it all in duty free as a member of the Diplomatic Corps of a Foreign Embassy.

Of Jevons I was growing very jealous, for he was paying marked attention to Chiquita, who, at twenty-six, was not so summary with admirers as she had been at eighteen, though she showed no more disposition to marry them, when they came to the point.

For some reason or other, it grated on me to see her accepting attentions from him, though it was no business of mine. I was not her keeper.

Candida was still Miss Begg, and Sir Randolph Rich was still in Japan, and her very devoted slave. This wonderful woman was now forty-two; but the healthy life she led in that exhilarating climate—long hours each day in the open air, and completely undressing and going to bed from after lunch till the

burden of the day was over in the hot weather, kept her face as young as any ordinary woman's at five-and-twenty; while her admirable figure did as much credit to her admirable dressing as ever. Their friendship was still recognised as scandal-proof, and Rich, at thirty-two, was able to enter into her interests far more. He played quite an intimate part, for instance, in the glorification of the half-acre of the Netheravon grounds which she gardened, and she had taught him to enjoy works of travel and biographies as well as novels, though he made no advance towards essays, much less poetry, and had not progressed as a collector or a sightseer.

His progress had been in a much more useful and important direction—in his sphere as a Secretary of Legation. It was not that he learnt a word of Japanese, or became more expert in the matter of dispatches, since he had succeeded first Finch as Second Secretary of the Legation, and, later, Tiffany as Secretary of Legation—a direct course of promotion most unusual in British Diplomatic appointments, and due to the combined influence of his relationship to Lord Salrose, Lord Clapham's representations, and Jevons' scheming. For Jevons had set his heart on Great Britain's making an offensive and defensive alliance with Japan, and saw in Rich the most useful instrument towards achieving it.

Rich—the first time such a thing had happened in the history of the foreign settlements in Japan—was influential, both at Tokyo and Yokohama. He had spent his time almost as much in the latter as in the former, and as a frequenter of the Club and the constant companion of the Sandys' and Candida, the most popular figures in Yokohama society, he knew all the leading English there. He was very popular, for he excelled in sports, to which he was devoted, and though so casual and reckless in his conversation, the baronet and ex-Grenadier had lost all trace of snobbishness under the levelling influence of a small community of

exiles in a hot climate. In spite of certain mannerisms, he was almost as natural as the delightful Candida.

In Tokyo his value lay in the fact that he had a title and an easy swagger on his country's account long after he had learnt to swagger on his own account.

He was a big, strong man, and very handsome, with his crisply and resolutely-cut features, ruddy-tanned face, and dare-devil blue eyes. He had never shaved off the moustache he wore while in the Army; but he kept it short, and it was so fair that you hardly noticed it. He was very particular about the cut and choice and grooming of his clothes, though like most Guards' officers, he dressed plainly to the unobservant eye.

He completely set the fashion to the Secretaries of the various Legations. They generally ape the Englishman of good form in their attire and habits, and in Rich they found a heaven-born general, while his exploits of strength and courage made him the ideal Englishman they had read so much about in novels. He could not talk any of their languages, but they could all talk his, English being the second language of Japan, in which railway tickets, advertisements and public notices are printed beside the native version, and in which native officials carry on their intercourse with foreigners. It is necessary for other countries to send English-speaking Secretaries to their Legations, and since, when he was in Tokyo, he took his meals at the Nobles' Club, where such of them as were bachelors mostly took theirs, he saw a good deal of them.

There were at this time two burning questions in Japan—the lately-concluded Alliance with Great Britain and the preparations for the War of Revenge against Russia for robbing them of Port Arthur. Russia had long since thrown off all disguise and perfidiously seized this very port which she had objected to Japan's occupying on account of its threatening the integrity of China. Not that the Japanese ever talked of a

Revanche. They were far too diplomatic. They pointed out instead that Russia's motto was only too plainly "*Delenda est Japan*," and set about preparing with a feverish intensity for the final struggle. For this reason they were overjoyed when Great Britain, mistress of India and possessor of the most powerful fleet maintained by any European nation in Eastern seas, concluded a defensive alliance with them on the basis that if either Power were attacked by more than one nation, the other should declare war on its behalf.

On the face of things this was a very one-sided arrangement. Japan seemed such a little Power to come to the assistance of Great Britain, and while there seemed every chance of Great Britain being called to fulfil her part of the compact, her attitude to the other European nations had been so insanely pacific for half a century past, that Japan might never have to take up the cudgels on her behalf. Few Europeans were aware of the immense power which Japan had built up by the unwearying training of soldiers and sailors, the accumulation of magnificent ships and artillery and all manner of warlike stores, the establishment of a vast network of spies, and a minuteness of geographical study in the future theatre of war, which had no parallel in history.

These advantages, of course, lost nothing in importance when Jevons was dwelling on them, and he received an unexpected ally in Rich.

Not that Rich was at all aware that Japan had become one of the Great Powers in fighting capacity—one of the "heavy-weights" as he would have described it in his sporting tongue. What he did think on this side of the question was that the Japanese, being Orientals, and vastly well informed by their spies, would be sure to get in the first blows, and might deal such damage as would cripple the other Power till Great Britain had time to come up; and that the British, with a proper intelligence department for the first time in their history, would astonish their

enemies and give a good account of any number of nations they might "have to take on."

Now Rich was no longer blazingly indiscreet as he had been in his first days at the Legation, so when he was talking to the Russians, the Germans and the French at the Nobles' Club, he did not air these sentiments, but brought into the argument, in his own vehement and picturesque smoking-room style, the unimpeachable sentiments of Orlando Jevons, whom he had so often heard declaring at Lord Clapham's table that it "had not become recognised that Japan was one of the great civilizing factors in the East, and that interference with her mission by a combination of Powers which did not understand the true inwardness of the Eastern situation, but regarded everything from the restricted point of view of the balance of power in Europe, was a thing to be avoided at all costs."

"Of course there never would be a war like this," he said to them. "The Powers were not going to plunge Europe into war for the sake of concessions to stock-brokers in the parts of China which were going cheap—that's where the value of the British Alliance came in. If they were not modest, they would have to put up their fists. But if it was only a case of a syndicate of Powers to squeeze Japan, they might play it low again, as they did after she had shown her pluck and half ruined herself by the war with China. You got your whack of China," he said, turning to the Graf von Nehmen. "You collared Port Arthur, and don't seem in any hurry to leave off taking care of Manchuria," he said to Grabolski. "And you—I don't know what you got out of it, except Grabolski's gratitude—you seemed to get about as little as Japan," he said to M. Dodo, the Frenchman, laughing in his jolly way, so as not to seem as if he meant it.

And they did not take him as seriously as he meant it; but it served, and in the English circle in Tokyo, Rich's going about saying that the Japs were a damned plucky lot and would make a jolly good ally for anybody had a considerable effect.

Yokohama was not so easily to be moved. The British merchants had their own idea about things, of which the most distinct was that Great Britain had just committed a crowning act of folly. They did not yet feel reassured on the subject of their persons and their property having passed under Japanese jurisdiction, and they had not availed themselves to any extent of the new extension of trading privileges, because they still had their doubts as to whether it would be possible to go on trading in Japan under Japanese law.

That Great Britain, after deliberately putting her subjects at the mercy of a semi-barbarous Power, had now made herself responsible for the protection of that Power in case its attitude to other countries brought it into collision with them, seemed perfect madness. Even Philip Sandys had grave doubts, though he was, as usual, among the most moderate of the Yokohama British in their attitude towards the Japanese.

But if it had not been for Rich, the growlings would have been much louder. As a member of the Legation he might have access to certain information which they had not, though he naturally would not be able to use it in arguing. Nor did they attach much value to his arguing, in which most of them were his superiors. Englishmen do a great deal of talking when they live in a country like Japan, where they have not much to do after dusk. Even Yokohama has no English theatre.

But, though they hardly listened to his arguments, they were impressed by his attitude. No one could mistake Rich for a Little Englander; he was a regular "You-be-damned-John Bull," and the fact that he was in favour of the Alliance counted with the people with whom his personality was important.

Candida and Mrs. Sandys would have been a drag upon Sandys' taking an active part against the Alliance, for they were naturally pleased at the idea of an alliance between the country of their race and the country of their birth.

Rich was in Yokohama now; a ball was going on at the Grand Hotel, and he had gone over from Tokyo to take Candida to it. She was, as everything about her would have suggested, an exquisite dancer, but it was so hot that you could not dance without rushing off for a lemon squash the moment the music stopped. So they sat down in one of the little alcoves, made of branches of trees, along the edge of the ball-room. The branches sprang out of tubs of earth, and looked as if they were growing. Japanese gardeners are very clever at this kind of thing. She and Rich enjoyed sitting still and inspecting the globe-trotters, who were very numerous, and had not yet learnt to respect the climate.

"You are very distraight," said Candida, touching him.

"I was looking at that girl."

"What girl? Is she so nice that there is only one in the room for you?"

"That girl there," he said, pointing with his eyes. "Did you ever see such health as that complexion! Her hair is like gold wire."

"That's what you always say when you are very much gone. . . . Oh, that girl? She certainly does extinguish the rest."

The girl was superb; a well-set-up woman in beautiful clothes, all smiles, with a lovely sunburnt face, which grew rosy with pleasure when she found a good partner. Candida found an additional charm in her—her features and her colouring were so suggestive of Rich's own. They could hardly take their eyes off her, either of them, for the rest of the evening. She danced beautifully and walked beautifully, and seemed a charmingly natural woman. She had evidently come by some ship which had brought a very large number of passengers; she knew so many people.

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When Rich came down the next morning at the Club,

fairly late, for he had stayed talking to Candida when he took her home, and was never the earliest of risers, he found a note forwarded from Tokyo.

Grand Hotel,
Yokohama,
J— —th, 1903.

Dear Cousin Randolph,

Don't be cross with me. I know you went out to Japan to get away from me, and I expect you did not try very hard to get leave to come home when I wrote to you, though I have seen by the papers that things have been rather disturbed in Japan. So I thought I could come out and see you here to settle the question of our marriage. It's so very awkward to be engaged to a man who does not want to marry you.

I am still,
Your affectionate cousin,
HONORIA RICH.

"Good old Honoria, good little Honoria," he said. "She did get in one or two. Fancy that little red flapper twiggling that I told the Chief that I didn't want the leave. And she signs herself 'still your affectionate cousin, Honoria!' Things are getting serious, Randolph Rich."

He called one of the Japanese waiters. "Boy, bring me paper and envelope."

"You want pen, ink, blotting-paper?"

"*Yoroshi.*"

Japanese breakfasts are rather elaborate affairs, and he went pretty well through the card that morning collecting his ideas as he munched. You order by numbers in Japan—and he had called for Number One—porridge and cream; Number Two—fried garfish; Number Three—bacon and eggs; Number Five—mutton chops. He missed out beefsteak, which was

Number Four; took potato chips, which was Number Six; and wound up with curry, Number Eight, and assorted fruits, Number Nine.

He laughed as he gave the order Number Nine. He drank bottled Bass, deliciously iced, with this egregious meal, and finally committed his thoughts to paper. He had taken plenty of time for consideration in comparison with the very moderate length of the chit which he scribbled off in a large, boyish hand.

United Club,
Yokohama,
J— —th, 1903.

Dear Honoria,

I am a cad to have kept you waiting like this. I am not going to marry you, and I can't marry anyone else, because I couldn't do without that five hundred.

Your aff. cousin,
RANDOLPH RICH.

"That means 'your affectionate cousin,'" he said to himself. "What a lie! But I shall be I daresay, when she is safely married."

He called the waiter again.

"Boy, send a *riksha* to the Grand Hotel with this chit."

Then he went out into the verandah and ordered another pint of the Bass—it was iced so exactly to his liking—and had just lit a choice cigar, with a sigh for the good old days when there were no tobacco duties in Japan (though he allowed himself to smoke exactly the same tobacco as before and never paid for any of it except with the accommodating chit), when the *riksha* boy came back, and dropping his shafts on the road, stepped up into the verandah with a profound salaam to hand him a reply.

"Oh, damn the woman," he said. "Isn't she going to give me any peace?"

He did not open the chit for about five minutes. It ran:—

Grand Hotel,
Yokohama,
J— —th, 1903.

Dear Cousin Randolph,

As I have come twelve thousand miles to see you, perhaps you won't object to sparing me half an hour of your valuable time. The subject is rather too large to settle in five lines of your writing. I don't suppose that you will eat much tiffin to-day, as I hear you are still at breakfast. Will you dine with me? We can dine in the public room if you are afraid of me.

Your affectionate cousin,
HONORIA.

"I like Honoria's vigorous way of expressing herself," he said, "and I don't know what question could be satisfactorily settled in five lines of my writing. But I think we'll dine in the coffee-room—a girl who can write a letter like that might be unpleasantly vigorous if we were alone."

He wrote back:

The United Club,
Yokohama,
J— —th, 1903.

Dear Honoria,

Many thanks for your invitation. I shall be delighted to dine with you at *table d'hôte* to-night. Dinner will give us a good opportunity for discussing things.

Your aff. cousin,
RANDOLPH.

He arrived a few minutes before the bell rang for *table d'hôte*. There were a good many people standing and sitting about the hall. Among them, conspicuously

well-dressed as at the ball, and still all in black, was his beauty. About half a dozen men at once, the pick probably of the ship-load, were trying to engage her attention.

"Good business I accepted," he thought. "I might get to know her. I needn't stay long with Honoria after dinner. . . Boy!" he called, "fetch me the hall-porter."

The hall-porter, a German, arrived very deferentially; he had a lofty idea of British titles, and was aware that Sir Randolph was the real head of foreign society in Japan, that he set the fashion to the other Legations, who tried to live up to him—in vain.

"Where shall I find Miss Rich?" he asked.

The man led the way, bowing, to his beauty.

She had taken the grand suite, which also impressed the Teutonic mind.

"Secretary of Legation, Sir Randolph Rich," he announced pompously.

"Get out you fool," said the baronet contemptuously.

There was laughter in the Beauty's eyes as she rose, though the air was so thunder-charged. They were the only two Riches in the world of their ancient family, and they had been separated for years by half the world, and were only meeting now to settle the time-honoured difference which had driven him to exile.

"Are you Miss Rich?" he asked hesitatingly. He was dumbfounded at the girl's beauty and breeding and obvious spirit.

"I'm Honoria," she said with dignity.

"And I'm Randolph."

One of Rich's nice characteristics was a sort of modesty or boyish shyness when he was very much impressed, and the effect of her appearance on him was not lost upon Honoria, who was, however, merciful.

His tongue was the less ready because he was

cursing his stars for having insisted on dining in the public room. If only they had been dining in her apartments he might have had some chance of apologising and getting back to the cousinly footing which he was afraid he had lost. To do him justice, he did not once think of the twenty thousand a year which he had only that morning finally rejected with the hand of this woman. They exchanged commonplaces till the dinner-bell rang. His spirits rose a little as the waiter conducted them to a table for two in the corner.

Honoria apologised.

"If we had dined at the long table, we must have sat next to my *gouvernante*, and I thought you might prefer not to discuss family affairs before her."

"Thanks awfully," he said in his impulsive way, not really listening to her explanation, in his relief at finding that they were to have a *tête-à-tête*. He expected to be handled pretty severely, but his fears on that score had vanished when he contemplated what a waste it would have been to dine at the *table d'hôte*. Not that he was apparently going to get much change out of it. She asked him in the orthodox way to choose which brand of champagne they should drink, and if there was any other wine he wished to begin with, and then relapsed into silence.

Meanwhile tongues were busy. There is nothing to talk about in Japan except sight-seeing and scandal, for the world is forgotten. But people had not forgotten that, at the ball of the night before, the pair who were dining together so intimately had not even been acquainted.

"What a minx," said Mrs. Tudor-Rose. She was dining with her mother, a lady with an even higher colour than her own, who had come out to Japan to see them.

"Rich is eclipsing himself," said her husband. He had a particular dislike to Sir Randolph, who had long since made up his mind that Mr. Tudor-Rose was a rotter, and was at no pains to conceal his opinion.

"They might be husband and wife!" Mrs. Rose had an evil tongue which gave her, though she did not know it, her *entrée* to the Legation, where she used to regale Chiquita with talk about the Tiffanys.

The cousins said nothing of account to each other during that first part of dinner—they were occupied in focussing each other with the unobtrusiveness of good breeding. Honoria had set the cue and Rich had taken it. For himself he would have been willing enough to "be jolly," as he called it, after he had had a glass or two of champagne to temper his awe of the woman whom he had treated so badly.

When the dinner was cleared away, and the dessert was put on the table, she said:

"Hadn't we better have our talk now, as we neither of us wish to marry each other?"

Rich, who had been dining well, as things had been so difficult, was not so sure on this point. If he had thought his cousin beautiful while he was watching her in the distance as a stranger, his admiration was doubled by the fresh points closer observation brought out, and by the dignity with which she paralyzed him.

"I thought it rather unkind of you to write me such a very curt note after I had come all the way from England to see you," she remarked with heightening colour.

"It wasn't because I didn't take time over it," he said, apologetically. "It took me a solid hour to compose."

"And you did begin with a sort of apology, you were going to add?"

"Oh, no, I wasn't," he said with a gruesome smile. "I was going to take my punishment lying down."

"What?" she asked, frowning at the familiarity of the slang, but with a sparkle in her eyes which he did not see because he was looking at the cherry-stones on his plate. They seemed to need counting.

"I've nothing else to say."

"Well, I'll excuse the tone of the letter, as it took you so long to write! And I am to take it as a definite refusal to marry me?"

Randolph was silent. Nothing was further from his wishes than to cut himself off irrevocably from marriage with this superb young cousin, but he considered himself pledged to Candida, to whom he was devoted. No brother or sister could have been as dear to him as Candida, the charming and clever and whole-souled woman who had given him the inestimable boon of her companionship for seven years past—more than that, given him his life as he well knew. Only he knew now that he had never been in love with her as he could be in love with this girl, before the night was over, if the recording angel had not been there to drive him forth from his Eden with a flaming sword.

"Just my damned luck," he was saying to himself, and Honoria guessed exactly what was passing through his uncomplex mind.

"Well?" she said, with the peculiar intonation by which women make that harmless particle ask inconvenient questions.

"I don't want to say that exactly."

"Was your letter meant to leave the matter indefinite?" she asked maliciously. "You seem to find a great difficulty in expressing yourself—on paper."

"No," he said with a touch of doggedness which was in keeping with his courageous nature; "I did not mean it to be indefinite."

"Perhaps you had not seen me when you wrote it?" She caught a look of admiration in his eyes, which she had intended to arouse, and grimly changed the tone of the remark by adding: "To know whether I should disgrace you or not—"

He began to protest, but she continued mercilessly, "By being a red-faced woman instead of a little red-faced flapper."

"No, I had seen you."

"I didn't pass muster?"

"It wasn't that. . . ."

"What was it then?" she asked. She had not the least desire to spare him.

"I didn't know that it was you," he said, laughing in spite of himself.

"Where did you see me?" she asked inconsequently.

"At the ball."

"So you did condescend to notice me?"

"Honoria," he said, looking her straight in the eyes, "I'm no good at this kind of game. Of course we noticed you. We thought you the most beautiful thing we had ever seen."

"Oh, you are married then? I think you might have sent a cable when you got mine and Mr. Payne's letters."

"No, I'm not married," he said, "and less than ever likely to be," he added gloomily. "I was talking to Candida."

"Candida!" she repeated, elevating her eyebrows.

"Candida Begg, the best 'fellow' in the world."

A glimmering began to penetrate Honoria's brain, which placed her cousin in a more sympathetic, if not more satisfactory, light. There was another woman in the case, to whom he was loyal.

"I've come too late," she said more good-naturedly.

"You have," he answered, with a gloominess which had a ring of sincerity that fairly astonished her.

"There's Candida!"

"Yes," he said, not blushing or confused, but with a ring of enthusiasm instead of the gloominess in his voice.

"I must see Candida," she remarked, with decision.

"All right," he said, with boyish ardour. "We'll call for you to-morrow in *rikshas* and go and buy silk handkerchiefs together. That's the foundation of every new friendship between foreigners in Japan."

"Very well," she said; "what time will you be here?"

"About eleven."

"Can you manage it as early as that?" she asked with concern.

"Yes," he said quite simply. "I get up late, not because I find it hard to get up early, but because there isn't anything to do when I am up."

"How about the Legation which could not spare

you when Lord Salrose gave you leave to go to England? ”

“ I get up just in time to go to it.”

“ I won't ask you when that is.”

The pleasantest part of the whole evening was the good-bye when she came to the door, and, in the courtesies of a hostess, allowed him to see for a second how delightful the woman could have been.

CHAPTER IX

THE meeting between Honoria and Candida was fraught with considerable interest to both of them. Honoria did not believe that Candida would come, as it were, at Randolph's bidding, and having heard that she was ten years older than her cousin, was a little unfavourably prepossessed. Randolph was the type of man over whom women past a certain age made fools of themselves, even supposing her not to be an adventuress. On the other hand, Candida could not but be disturbed at finding that the woman whose beauty had carried both Randolph and herself away, was the cousin whom it was intended that he should marry under his uncle's will. Randolph would be more than human if out of fidelity to herself he refused such a splendid heritage, along with the hand of such a lovely woman.

In the interval, both women, very high-spirited and courageous, were anxious for the meeting, so as to take each other's measure.

The good Randolph, as the French would have called him, did not see the difficulties—he had an idea that it would be easier for him if two such nice women met and found there was no harm in each other. So at eleven o'clock he and Candida rattled up to the Grand Hotel in their *rikshas*, and were shown up to Honoria's suite.

There was no doubt about Honoria's dressmaker, he was glad of that; and she had the sense to find sufficient mourning in a broad black sash. The Japanese summer demands concessions.

She paid her visitors the compliment of being ready, even to the extent of holding her parasol.

The two women met cordially. At a glance they

knew that they could respect each other. Yet it was doubtful which had the more mixed feelings. Honoria could see that Candida was no adventuress. She regarded it as great good fortune for a man like her cousin, stranded in Japan, to have absorbed the friendship of such a woman. But supposing that her own marriage with her cousin came on the tapis again, she felt that the way Candida might regard it must be treated as a factor of the greatest importance.

Candida, on the other hand, not only recognised that the situation was changed by the remarkable beauty and charm of the girl to whom his uncle's will related, but she also saw that the poison was working already. At a glance she knew that his cousin's personality had affected Randolph, as neither she nor any other woman in Japan had ever affected him. He might not be in love with her yet, or might not know it, but she was the woman he would fall in love with.

What did the future hold in its lap? Was she, Candida, to accept her fate like a lamb led to the slaughter, or was she to take her part in the moulding of her life as she always had done?

There was one master decision awaiting her consideration. She loved Randolph with her whole heart. Was her love to make her selfish, and spend itself in binding Randolph to her, or was it to make her recognise that the best way she could show her affection was by forcing him to accept the good fortune provided for him.

The two women wasted no time in discovering that they could tolerate each other. Indeed, when she and Randolph got home to lunch, Candida, with praiseworthy honesty, said:

"The girl is as charming as she is pretty, Dick."

"And that afternoon, with characteristic magnanimity, she wrote to Chiquita, with whom she had again become intimate as the excitement over the Boer War died down:—

"That cousin Dick has always been talking about is in Yokohama, staying at the Grand. Ask her up to Tokyo, and make him marry her, there's a dear."

To which Chiquita, who did not care whom he married, so long as the marriage did not involve the sacrifice of her dear Candida to a man who was not the right husband for her, replied: "All right, if you will bring her."

There was no awkwardness about the invitation. Honoria's father and Lord Clapham had been life-long friends, and Chiquita, like all her countrywomen, was a match-maker. She would thoroughly enjoy making Rich marry the little red-faced cousin, whose name he had so often taken in vain.

When they arrived, it was Chiquita's turn to be astonished. Candida had said nothing about Honoria's personal appearance. Chiquita saw before her one of the superb English aristocrats who put all other women into the shade when they make their Easter invasion of the Rooms at Monte Carlo with their height, their carriage, their lovely bright colouring, and golden hair—but withal a gracious, natural girl.

Chiquita stole a look at Rich, who had escorted them up from Yokohama. She knew in that glance that there was no occasion for her to interfere to bring Rich to his knees. This was a matter in which she could decide with absolute confidence, as he had made her the offer of his future title more than once; and she had submitted to many pettings from him when she was in the mood.

She anticipated much more trouble from the other side. Why should a lovely woman with all that money wish to saddle herself with an empty-headed practical joker like Randolph Rich? She herself had given him instantaneous refusals, lonely as she was in Japan; and it had been her nightmare that Candida might drift into marrying him.

Honoria rather puzzled her. That she had set a price on herself, that she was not to be had for the asking was natural enough. It did not seem to have so much connection with her great fortune as with the slights she had received from Randolph. That Chiquita could also understand, and gave her due credit for it. What she could less understand was that in Randolph, the man, Honoria saw no particular shortcomings, though she might not reciprocate his affection.

But this was not really so odd as it seemed to Chiquita. In England, in his own hunting and house-party set, Randolph's idleness and rowdiness would not have been exceptional, while his strength and pluck and skill in all kinds of sport and games were exceptional. At Tokyo he had been a round peg in a square hole, till the influence which he exercised had such an unexpected weight in the politics of the Settlement.

A whole month passed in parties at the various Legations and excursions, and latterly in curiosity-shopping. In the first two they had a good deal of Randolph's society; and in the first especially I had many opportunities for observing them. My footing at the British Legation had now become so intimate that I had the run of the other Legations, where my knowledge of the Japanese language made me really welcome when once they had come to know me. No matter what the capital is, one feature of its diplomatic corps is sure to be the marked insularity of the British representatives compared to the rest. The others, with local exceptions, try to enter into the life of the people to whom they are accredited. The Britons try to set up a Little Britain in *partibus infidelium*, which Little Britain, it should be observed, is associated with ideas exactly opposite to those of Little Englanders. The Little Englander abroad out-Herods Herod—he not only appreciates the country in which he finds himself, but compares everything in it with the corresponding English institution or article to the confounding of the latter. He would find the genuine Brown Windsor Soap of English manufacture inferior to the stony-hearted imitations current from Japan to Italy. The one thing in which he is patriotic is a preference for whiskey made in Scotland. Only Americans yield to the fascinations of the four-franc variety concocted in France. It is to be observed also that the ultra-Britishness of British Legations is balanced by no corresponding fervour in looking after the interests of Great Britain or individual Britons. It exists solely as a form of swagger, like the correct crease in the trousers, for the junior members of British diplomatic staffs.

The care taken by other countries to send English-speaking Secretaries to Japan made up for my unfortunate ignorance of any language but my own and Japanese. I made many pleasant friendships amongst them in my capacities of collector and antiquary, for most of them had some small hobby of the sort, and one or two had got themselves appointed for the purpose of collecting or studying.

Rich naturally accompanied his cousin to the parties, because it was as his cousin, and not as the guest of the British Legation, that she had been invited to the first with such enthusiasm. When she had been to one party, there would naturally have been as great a competition for her presence at the others, if she had no introductions at all.

Before she had been in Japan a week, anybody could see that Rich was hopelessly in love with his cousin. I use the word with the double meaning that Rich was unable to control his feelings, and that Miss Rich gave him no encouragement.

Not that she was not extremely nice to him at parties. It was really all to his advantage in his suit that she was so firm in avoiding him on other occasions, as, for instance, after dinner in our own Legation, where he was always welcome to drop in to any meal, and indeed rather expected to turn up while his cousin was staying there.

In a *tête-à-tête*, in a little after-dinner group, he could be very tiresome if you were not in the mood for his jocosities or flirtations. But at a big garden party at one of the Tokyo Legations Sir Randolph was so obviously *the* man, and was so careful about his behaviour so that nobody should have a word to say against English form, that anyone would have been favourably impressed with him, especially the patriotic Honoria, whose flesh and blood he was.

In excursions, too, she could not help liking him. Sometimes they all drove, more often they made up riding parties, and there was a good deal of *al fresco* picnicking. In all the little *contretemps* which occur on these occasions, even where you had the assiduous Japanese servant to wait upon you, he was always the

handy man, always good-natured, never too tired or too hot to do anything, and what he lacked in the power of æsthetic enjoyment he made up in his hearty enjoyment of trifles.

I was taken on all of their expeditions, for which I had time, because Honoria was no fool, and liked to look at the things which she went to see, and be told all about them. I was rather gratified to note that Chiquita seldom went if I did not, and that when I was showing Honoria over anything she always accompanied us and took a most intelligent interest in what I was saying. I thought, too, that Candida was grateful for my presence, for Rich made no pretence of being interested in what Honoria was seeing. I had rather expected that he would simulate a desire to see everything, though he might not possess it; Honoria was so intent upon looking at things that he could have looked at her, and he was generally looking at her when he could do so without her noticing it.

But whenever she went in to see a thing he simply waited outside like a dog until she had done. Candida noticed it, and took compassion on him. It began with compassion, but as time went on I thought that those interludes made Candida's day. For years she had been the tenant of almost every leisure thought of Rich's, and now the glorious personality of Honoria had intruded itself on the scene.

Honoria's personality was glorious. We others, who were not in disgrace like Rich, basked in its full sunshine. She was almost as lovely as Mrs. Sandys when I first saw her, and was the most superbly-made woman I ever saw. She was so tall and so majestic without the least sacrifice of grace and activity. And her colouring was simply adorable under its ruddy sunburn, though it was easy to see that in England its rose and white must have been lovelier still. But one of the most delightful things about her was that, in spite of her pride (of whose wounds Rich was so painfully conscious) she had, at the very threshold of womanhood, the graciousness and ease of women like Mrs. Sandys and Candida. If Rich had not been an idiot, he might have been the happiest man alive.

The time which hung heaviest on her hands was the morning, when the men of the various Legations were at their offices. I, of course, except on festival days, could not take their place, for I was still more tied at the Dai Gakku.

Candida, who was feeling worried away from her garden and her books, and compelled when she was in the house to kill time in the aimless way which was natural to Chiquita, suggested that they should take *rikshas* and go out curio-shopping. Honoria eagerly assented; she was accustomed to kill time at Richborough, but she killed it in the open air, not inside a house kept almost as dark as night to exclude the heat. Candida did not know very well where to go in Tokyo, but the *riksha* boys took them to the most expensive shops, which also happened to be the best, and suited Honoria well enough. Her pocket was deep, and they sold the kind of pieces suited for the decoration of rich Europeans' houses. Candida, being a resident in Japan, had the sense to advise her to bring Mr. Sandys or some other expert—she even mentioned my name—to see them before closing with the dealer.

That day's shopping whetted Honoria's appetite for curio-shopping, a delightful occupation if you have got twenty thousand a year and have not yet got large ideas of the kind of pieces which are worth your attention.

Honoria, being in an excitement to complete her purchases, was sure that I should do perfectly well, and I went with them on the following afternoon. I did not give her the mortifications which many residents delight in inflicting on globe-trotters, of pronouncing the whole lot rubbish, vamped up for the European market. But I got her to let me buy for her, at a saving of forty or fifty per cent., which I recommended her to lay out in other objects of the same class—fine modern Japanese work made to stand the heated atmosphere of European rooms, which is so fatal to the glue of some of the best old pieces, since the Japanese do not use fires. I guessed that a woman like Honoria, if she were fitting up a Japanese room

at Richborough, would prefer things which were of some conceivable use, instead of what was to her artistic lumber. But I said:

"You must not only buy furniture—there are heaps of exquisite knick-knacks which repay collection even as an investment, and make your house enviable and famous at the expenditure of only a few hundred pounds." Rich had so often complained of Honoria's income being offered him as a bribe, that its amount was common hearsay in Japan.

I offered to take her and Candida to a lot of good curio-shops down in the heart of the native city near the Nihombashi, and to do her bargaining for her. She was delighted, and the plan worked very well at first, for Rich stayed outside, or sometimes came in, with Candida, while Honoria and I were hard at work over our purchases. We went out every afternoon as soon as ever I got away from the Dai Gakku and had had a cup of tea.

But curio-buying is a passion which grows on you at an alarming rate. Honoria's purchases took so long that Rich got tired of waiting for her, when the same thing happened at shop after shop. He tailed off in his attendances, and then Candida found that the long waiting was too much for her too. She was not at all well, for one thing; she was feeling run down. Things might have cured themselves if Rich and Candida had only gone out for rides together, like they used to, but Rich had grown restless when he was out of the society of Honoria, and Candida, though she said nothing, was horribly hurt by the discovery.

We were all right, for Chiquita offered to chaperone Honoria, and her patience was limitless of its kind, though when she did not want to be patient she was a demon of impatience. She had never done any curio-shopping in the curious dens near the Nihombashi, and between Shiba and Shinagawa, to which I was now taking Honoria. She hated the European curio-shops in the Ginza, to which Candida had taken her. But ferreting about in the godowns of my sort of curio-shop, with withered old Japanese collectors as gnarled as their fir-trees, waited on by the quaintest servants,

tickled her immensely. There was so much interest to be got out of them—as much as there is to be got out of watching the Japanese farmer coaxing his miniature estate. Chiquita enjoyed herself immensely, and told everyone about it; she was quite full of it.

Rich felt rather sorry for himself, but consoled himself with reading the newspapers at the Legation instead of at the Nobles' Club, which had been his wont. The only complaint that passed his lips was, "Why the blazes doesn't the old man take in the *Field* instead of *Nature*? They are both about Nature, only one's the kind of thing you want to read and the other isn't."

Candida had to lie down all the afternoon. Dull as he was, he was almost glad of this, for he was such a warm-hearted man that it was very painful to him to notice that she was aware of the change in him. When he remembered, he played the gentle hypocrite, but he was always forgetting, just as he used to forget that he was in form when we were at school, and whistle or sing till the master came down upon him like a steam-hammer. I remember to this day how much cleverer one master was who, instead of saying anything to him, directed the ridicule of the class to the quality of his voice. Rich never could sing in tune, and he whistled like a stuffed-up dog-whistle.

From going out curio-hunting together Chiquita and Honoria took to going out on other kinds of expeditions. One afternoon we had arranged to go to the Asakusa Temple to see the side-shows. This was Chiquita's suggestion. She was very fond of watching the poor Japanese amusing themselves. A little while before we were going to start, Honoria went into the smoking-room, where the papers were kept, and found Rich there.

"Do you often come here in the afternoon?" she asked, remembering that we generally found him there when we came back from our shopping.

"Pretty well every afternoon," he said.

Honoria saw the situation at a glance, for a man like her cousin to spend such weather indoors was a kind of revolution. And a woman's intuition supplied her with the reason. He could not stand the waiting

in the curio-shops, but he did not wish to miss a minute of the talk he had with her when she laid all the treasures acquired in the day out on the big oval table.

"How selfish we all are!" she said impulsively. "Now that poor Candida is seedy you don't get your ride." She felt that Rich was not the kind of man who would go out riding alone, observing things with a Wordsworthian eye. "I'll come with you, if you like—it won't take me long to get into my habit, and I'm sure Mr. Page and Miss Palafox will be quite happy when they get to that wonderful place."

The smile of delight which broke over his honest face was more than a reward. It touched Honoria's own heart, and brought forth on their ride a flood of reminiscences of the old days when she was a child and he was the tall lieutenant in the Guards, who was commanding a line of Grenadiers who were keeping the crowd back in St. James's Street just beside the big ground floor window, which Sir Cornwallis had taken for the Jubilee procession of the Queen. Every now and then he came to the window to be fed with chocolates by his little cousin, who, regardless of discipline, pushed them under the chained lip-strap of his great bear-skin. That was during her childish beauty, before she passed into red-faced flapperhood. And he often, for the rest of that season, came to their house in Curzon Street to play with the child. He was always a mountain of good nature.

From these reminiscences they passed to what each had been doing in the seven or eight years since they had seen each other.

They rode with a loose rein through the delicious avenues of Shiba, unnoticing the temples, whose glories had almost taken away Honoria's breath a day or two before, or the crowds of Japanese holiday-makers who frequent Shiba, on any day of the year, and are as amusing as a comic paper.

When they got home, and had sent their horses away and stood in the hall of the Legation before going upstairs to the smoking-room, the general rendezvous of the house, Randolph said:

“ You have been very cross with me, Honoria, and I deserved it, for I behaved like a perfect cad, but I’m beastly sorry. Aren’t you going to let bygones be bygones? ”

He was not prepared for her answer, though he would have taken a downright refusal as being no more than he deserved; but she asked him, almost passionately:

“ Oh, why didn’t you say this before? ”

And if he had tried to avail himself of a cousin’s privilege, there would have been no resistance from that beautiful face.

CHAPTER X

CANDIDA evaded admitting how ill she was by dint of her courage and by getting up very late in the morning, and lying down all the afternoon. She managed to put in an appearance at dinner and lunch, and to be her old gracious self, but nobody guessed what a tax on her physical energies it was. And nobody could believe that she really was ill, for she had been in Japan ever since she was born, more than forty years before, without an hour's real illness, in a land where the transit to the Happy Valley is often such a very brief one.

There is a proverb that hope deferred makes the heart sick. It can make the body sick, too, though the proverb does not record it, and hope shattered is a yet more deadly ill.

Candida was yielding to the inevitable. She did not blame Randolph. Who could resist a woman like Honoria, with all Bryn Sandys' old charm and the added sweetness which had only come to Bryn when she had been tried in the fire and found wanting? Honoria was a jewel of fairness. Candida recognised that. She had not raised her little finger to draw the vagabond Randolph to her since she had first set eyes upon him in Japan. She had paid back his slights, if without revengefulness, at any rate with dignity and immobility.

These thoughts were passing through Candida's mind on the very evening after Honoria had volunteered to ride with Randolph. This was part of the sarcasm which forms the diversion of Fate.

Honorio was still firm and dignified, but she had given Randolph a place in her heart before Candida formulated these thoughts.

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I, like Randolph Rich, blessed whatever gods there be that day. I did not trouble myself as to what grouping of the planets had decreed that Honorio should be called away and leave me to take Chiquita alone to the fair at the Asakusa Temple. The one thing needful was that Chiquita should make no objection. She did not seem in the least put out. She was in the brilliant spirits in which her Southern charm showed to such advantage.

Many straws showed which way the wind blew.

I knew the Tokyo *riksha* boy fairly well—he will consent to almost any arrangement when he is trying to persuade you to hire him; but if you are taking him for a long job and no arrangement has been made, a week's profits will hardly satisfy him for a day's labour, in which he resembles the cabmen who are not their own horses.

Generally, whenever we were hiring *rikshas*, and a two minutes' conversation would have put the whole affair right, she showed such signs of impatience that we had to start without making an arrangement, and was equally impatient when we came back because the man was not satisfied with his proper fare and a good present. But on this occasion she reminded me that the men had been troublesome the last time we went out, and said that I was so very clever at managing them. There were occasions when we went out sight-seeing, on which she tried everything in a comprehensive place like the Shiba or Asakusa Temples, and found them all wanting. On this occasion she was willing to take an interest in anything.

All I gathered from this was that it offended her

sense of youth to be a chaperone, and that the barometer was sinking at the British Legation. Chiquita was quite of the opinion that sacrifice was better than obedience, but the *rôle* of scapegoat had no charms for her. She decided that it was in Honoria's province to clear the air, which was only an indirect way of confessing that Honoria held the cards. Chiquita noticed the moment that Honoria ceased to keep her cousin at bay, and taxed her with weakening. Honoria's high spirit for a moment forbade her to make any reply to the aspersion, but she liked honesty, and was conscious of innocence.

"I do like Randolph," she said, "in spite of all his absurdities; he's an awfully fine fellow. I couldn't be fonder of him if he was my own brother."

"I can understand that," said Chiquita, "but I don't think you quite know all the circumstances of the case. Candida Begg, who is the dearest friend I ever had, wrote to me asking me to invite you to stay at the Legation and to try and make it up between you and your cousin, who had treated you very badly. We've all been chaffing Sir Randolph for years about having to marry you, and we all were anxious that he should because he's a man, a real man, and we're very fond of him in spite of the dance he has led us. I did what she asked me, and I would sooner have cut off my right hand, now that it is done. . . ."

"Why?"

"Because I have succeeded."

Honoria gave a grave little nod that was full of meaning, which Chiquita mis-interpreted.

"We Spaniards have many sayings—one is, 'Fate is an ill horse to drive,' another, 'The Saints only hear what they wish,' and they both point the same lesson—that Fate arranges our affairs better than we arrange them ourselves; that when we try to drive Fate in the direction we want we get her kicks instead. And as the saints, who are Fate for the common people, only grant such prayers as are good for you, it is safer to

do nothing and call on the saints for what you want than to try and take it for yourself. I have spoken in proverbs, because our proverbs are like your English hints—they give advice which you need not take."

"Do not speak in riddles, Miss Palafox. I can hear the truth without offence, and I feel that something is going wrong."

Chiquita searched her face with all the intuitive processes used by the Latin races for finding out if a person really means something of importance on which he is passing his word—and then proceeded.

"Candida asked me to invite you here to make your cousin fall in love with you. I have done what she asked me, and it has broken her heart. I don't know how people break their hearts, but she is dying from it," she added, with one of her characteristic flashes of tragi-comedy.

It was not for Honoria to deny that Randolph had fallen over head and ears in love with her—anyone could see it, let alone the woman who inspired it, and she was far too straightforward to make the excuses of the false-modest.

"I did not know that Miss Begg was so fond of the dear fellow as to go into a decline because she has been so generous as to give him up. But I have seen that she loved him for a long time, and that is why I have been keeping him at a distance. It was not hard to forgive Randolph about the letter, when he's sorry he's as sorry as a child. The hard thing was to keep him unforgiven—because one knew what would happen next."

"Then you wanted to forgive him?"

"Of course I did. He's the man I've always dreamt of marrying since I can remember."

"Don't think me awfully rude, Miss Rich, but would you marry him now?"

"I won't say that."

Chiquita formed her own conclusions and acknowledged the existence in the world of a generosity of

which she was herself incapable. She felt sure that she had read Honoria's heart right, but she did not mean to leave anything to chance.

"How I wish we could do something for Candida," she cried passionately. She was a born actress, and could work herself up at a moment's notice. "She isn't the same girl that saved your cousin's life at the temple."

"Saved his life?" cried Honoria, with glowing colour. "Oh, do tell me about it."

"Get your cousin to tell you," said Chiquita, with malice prepense. "I didn't see the whole of it."

Honoria did not go straight to Randolph armed with the new knowledge, she went first to Candida's room.

She knocked at the door.

"Come in!" Candida was expecting O-hana, Chiquita's maid, whom she had just dispatched on a message. She was in the act of adding a faint touch of colour to her cheeks with a hare's-foot, and blushed for a glorious moment at being detected. But the blush quickly faded from her cheeks in her anæmic state.

"May I speak to you privately, Miss Begg?" said Honoria, glancing at the door. Candida crossed the room and locked it.

Honoria noticed how feebly she walked, and flew after her.

"Lie down a little," she said, gently leading her to the couch and laying her on it with affectionate hands.

"I want to thank you for bringing me and my cousin together."

A kind of spasm went over Candida's face. "It's only my heart," she said faintly. She was speaking physically, but Honoria smiled to herself at the *double entendre*.

"I've quite made it up with him; but I'm not going to marry him. I don't think the marriage would be

quite a success." Candida tried to say something, but Honoria talked on. "I have reasons which I can't mention."

Candida strove to look disinterested, but a smile of thankfulness—rather a wan smile—stole over her face. She would have liked to protest, but she felt too weak, and why should she battle further against her own happiness when she was not long for this world? It could mean nothing to Honoria if she did marry him; it would only be to carry out her father's wishes, not her own. Indeed, it seemed waste for such a beautiful and charming woman with her great fortune to be lost in marriage with Randolph Rich, who would keep her down at Richborough most of the year, enjoying the common round of the country gentleman's life, varied, at best, with some racing.

He hated Town too much to go in for a career. Honoria ought to be the wife of a man with a career, and double his successes.

Thus Candida in her own mind piled up excuses for a piece of conduct which she could not but condemn in her own clear vision of what Randolph would call "playing the game."

It was this which prompted her to say, "Would you think it very extraordinary of me, Miss Rich——"

"Honoria!"

"——Honoria, would you think it very extraordinary of me if I asked you to kiss me?"

Honoria did not answer in words, and the way she responded wiped away Candida's fears that she must think meanly of her. Honoria knelt by her for a while, holding her hands, distressed really by their transparency, which did not seem natural in the bold horsewoman and active open-air person that Randolph had brought to see her at the Grand Hotel in Yokohama.

When she got up after making the blood warmer in Candida's veins with the outpourings of her own warm heart, she went off to find Randolph, who was

generally waiting about for her after Legation hours.

She found him, as she expected, in the smoking-room. It had been rather a rendezvous of theirs since his forgiveness. It was not a room that Chiquita ever used, except when they all swarmed in there together after an excursion or a meal. She preferred her own work-room or the turret-recess in the big drawing-room, according to the degree of favour enjoyed by the person she was receiving.

Randolph was standing over the large oval table on which Lord Clapham had the newspapers arranged, as they are in Clubs, so that you could find the one you wanted at a glance. He was sucking a smoked-out pipe, and leaning on the palms of his hands reading the front page of advertisements in the *Athenæum*, and thinking how badly his Chief's newspaper list needed revising. He heard a rustle behind him, and felt a hand on his shoulder and a woman leaning against him lightly as she peeped to see what he was reading. Turning half round, he saw Honoria's golden head, and felt sure in his own graphic phraseology that the game was up; even before he heard the fatal words, "Randolph, I want you to tell me about Candida—Miss Begg—saving your life."

He turned now, and faced her; and as the cousins stood by that table anyone who looked in would have formed an erroneous impression, for Honoria stood with downcast eyes saying nothing, but with her fair face flushing from time to time, and Randolph was pouring out a stream of eager words.

The Riches were generous—there was not a doubt of that. It would have been an *elixir vitæ* to Candida to have heard Randolph telling what he owed to her. When he stopped, Honoria raised eloquent eyes to him. She knew now why he had not told her that he loved her, and how willing he would have been to carry out his part of the contract which had been her father's dying wish.

She reminded herself that when she first heard of

his devotion to a woman so much older than himself, she had pictured Candida, either as one of the elderly women who make fools of themselves over dashing young Grenadiers, or else as an adventuress, possessed of some little means, perhaps, who was glad to marry a baronet. She had been unable to picture a woman like Candida's self, and had never dreamt of Randolph owing his life to her heroism.

It was only after she had looked up that a love-scene really did come.

"As you don't mean to marry me, Honor," he began, using unconsciously the pet name he had given her when a child, "you may just as well have your revenge for the way I have treated you, and know that I love you, as I never expected to love anybody in the world."

She controlled herself with an effort, which he did not notice, and said, with the best pretence of spirits she could muster: "You can love me as much as you like as a cousin. But if you ever thought I'd marry an explosive like you after I'd got to know the kind of life you've led, you were very much mistaken."

He looked as if she had stabbed him, and she felt as if she had stabbed herself.

"I didn't want to hurt you, Ran," she said hastily. "I love you just as much as I did when I was a little girl before you went to Japan. You can be on the footing of a brother with me."

He tried to say something, but failed.

She put her own interpretation on it, and said:

"If it wasn't for the five hundred, I suppose you would have married Candida long ago."

"Yes, I should," he answered readily.

"Well, marry her as quickly as you can. I suppose there's an English lawyer in Yokohama who can execute a deed making the five hundred a year for life instead of till you are married. I'll have it done at once."

"Yes—of course there is. But I don't love her

now—not—in that way. It is you that I love now, Honor!”

“You have answered yourself with that last word ‘*Honour!*’ She saved your life—it is your turn now.”

He smiled. “My turn to save her life? What do you mean?”

“Miss Palafox has put it more plainly than I should perhaps have had the courage to express it. She says in so many words that Candida is rapidly going into a decline, and that as she is an orphan with no one to force her to live, she won’t get over it.”

Intuition was not Randolph’s strong point, but Chiquita’s hint was broad. That Candida, his bosom friend for years, the woman who had saved his life, was ill from neglect, cut him to the quick.

“By Jove!” he said, “it’s time to dress for dinner.” That was his transparent subterfuge to express that he was going to look for Candida.

Honorina kissed him.

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O-hana said that Miss Begg had not begun to dress yet, and showed him Candida’s room. He knocked at her door.

“May I come in?”

“I want my sal-volatile—I am so faint!” said a weary voice.

He opened the door cautiously; he was fearful of intrusion, for she had not noticed that it was his voice. The extreme neatness struck him; there was nothing but the bed to show that it was not a sitting-room. It gratified his senses, this little touch of Candida.

The smile that broke over her wan face as she recognised his presence made fresh scales drop from his eyes.

“Is that you, Dick? How good of you to come.” He stooped to her outstretched arms.

"Candida, old girl, I've brought good news! We can marry as soon as you are ready. Honoria has offered to continue my five hundred a year after we've married, and we can live on that and my screw, if we're careful."

"Say it again, Dick."

He repeated it to her.

Honoria was on the watch for him to leave Candida's room, and slipped in directly after him. The look on Candida's face told her that it was all right."

"I suppose I have to congratulate you?" she said, meaning, "You're engaged now, aren't you?"

But Candida took it in the other sense, and answered:

"Indeed you have. The one ambition of my life has been to marry Dick. Oh, how I hope that I shall get well now that I have so much to live for."

From another woman than Honoria Candida's last sentence might have provoked a smile, but Honoria answered with cheerful conviction:

"Of course you will. You've been doing it all to yourself."

"Oh, am I such a soft as that?" asked the happy Candida.

"My dear, if I used Randolph's select expressions, I should say that you had behaved like a two-year-old. And now do all of us the favour of being just as childish about getting well again, because you've got the moon that you were crying for!"

"Miss Rich!"

"Honoria!"

"*Honoria*, then! you're not saying this sarcastically, are you? It's very foolish and weak of me, I know, but I'm not well enough to stand sarcasm just yet."

"My dear, not for the world! We've all been so miserable at seeing you slip through our fingers."

Candida had managed to struggle down to meals all along, but she had excused herself from evening

dress. To-night, however, it was noticed that she had been able to dress. Honoria had discouraged her, but it was so warm that there was no risk of her catching cold, so finding Candida bent on it, the good-natured heiress stayed with her and saved her all the fatigue she could, and came down herself in the hastiest dinner toilette, wilfully selected for its unbecomingness.

His *fiancée's* appearance was an agreeable shock to Randolph; he was not aware that women look their best in the first stage of convalescence, and he was not prepared to see her once more her well-groomed self (which was due to Honoria's affectionate fingers).

Honoria had carried the news to Chiquita, and Chiquita reserved it as a *bonne bouche* for her uncle's dinner. She told me that Lord Clapham seldom went into the dining-room with his family. Afternoon tea was his dinner; he took any number of cups; he might, with Dr. Johnson, have said: "I don't count by the cups, but by the pots." A dozen cups was nothing unusual with him as he settled down to work at his philosophy after the Legation business was over. He never took any exercise; he hardly went outside the house except on official visits. When the Legation moved to Nikko or Miyanoshita for the summer, his habits were the same. He used to forget all about dinner till his Japanese butler became desperate, and then came in the frock coat which he wore as the kind of livery of his position, and took whatever was given to him. You might have expected him to be a teetotaler, but he enjoyed good wine, and when he had drunk two or three glasses, entered into conversation with his household, sometimes allowing himself to be chaffed by Chiquita in a helpless sort of way, at others talking most brilliantly, but far above the heads of a dinner-table in Japan.

"Uncle," shrieked Chiquita; "Sir Randolph's going to turn over a new leaf."

"With Miss Begg?" he asked, with the appositeness of children and fools.

Poor Candida blushed furiously. Most people at the table, if not Lord Clapham, were aware of the very affectionate terms which had existed between her and Rich for the last seven years, and Lord Clapham's remark reversed the signification of his niece's.

"You have been long enough making up your minds as to whether you loved each other."

It was now Randolph's turn to be embarrassed, as he had not proposed to Candida until he was in love with somebody else, and he was just as good at blushing as either Candida or Honoria; he was so ingenuous that he could not help turning round to receive his sentence from Candida's eyes; and for the life of him he could not make out what it was. But he was contented, for he saw on her face absolute devotion and a radiant prettiness that made her, at any rate in that wax candle-light, for Chiquita would not have the electric light at dinner, quite the old Candida who had queened it at Yokohama.

"When are you going to be married?" asked Lord Clapham.

"Quite soon, sir," said Randolph desperately. "While my cousin is still in Japan to represent the family."

The Minister's question made him feel horribly remiss; he now felt that he ought to have clamoured for Candida to fix the day, whereas an hour before he thought he had been acting rather nobly in proposing to her at all. It was about the most hypocritical thing he had ever done in his life.

As dinner wore on he felt better about it. There was no mistaking the affection which she inspired in others. Every one was so obviously delighted that her happiness had been accomplished. And he began to remember that of all the people in whose society he had passed much time, he had never found such a jolly companion as Candida. His comfort and everyday happiness were secured, and he did not feel so

sure about this new matter of love, to which he had only so very lately given a trial.

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Each succeeding day Candida felt stronger, and Randolph more satisfied. Accustomed as he had been to her frank affection, he was not aware until now how much she had kept back—what witchery she had to lavish on the man who had the right to receive it.

CHAPTER XI

CANDIDA was married, rather naturally, from the Sandys' house and not her own little bungalow. It was no tax on such well-off people, and Bryn enjoyed having the send-off from their hospitable home. Philip Sandys gave her away. I was partner to a pretty surprise which Honoria had arranged for them.

The gold-lacquered letter boxes of Japan are some of them among the chief treasures of European Museums, and Honoria and I ransacked all our favourite curio-shops to find the most beautiful example which could be procured. Even with my knowledge of values and my experience in bargaining she paid a very large sum for it. It was of the choicest gold lacquer, with an exquisite scene from the Genji Mongatari, a typical bit of old Japanese architecture and legend, executed on it in relief, an object which the untrained taste could appreciate, in addition to its being such a splendid example of Japanese art. It was bound round with a rich crimson silk cord, tied in one of the old *Daimio* knots.

In old Japan these boxes were used by the *Daimios* as marks of esteem to convey their letters. The box was not retained, but returned to the sender. Honoria, however, gave special instructions that Candida was to keep the box, and that she was not to open it till after the wedding, as it contained nothing but the deed about Randolph's allowance. Just as Candida was going away after the wedding, she called Honoria into Mr. Sandys' study to say good-bye to her, exclaiming, "I owe you so much!"

To Honoria's surprise she saw that gold lacquer box, worth far more than its weight in pure gold, lying on the table unopened. She had imagined that

Candida had been refering to its contents, and blushed furiously when Candida undid the knot before her, saying :

"It's the first time I ever had the heart to undo one of these lovely knots."

There was no getting out of it now, so Honoria stood there, meekly awaiting her fate. The box surely enough contained nothing but an officious-looking blue envelope. Candida was overcome with shyness in opening it; it was embarrassing enough to receive a present of five hundred pounds a year from a girl without having to read the deed, which conferred it, in her presence.

As she read it through, she almost fainted, for it conveyed to Sir Randolph Rich, Bart., and Dame Candida Rich, his wife, not five hundred pounds a year, but ten thousand, for the proper maintenance of the family seat of Richborough, which was likewise conveyed to them below, with the proviso that a suite of apartments to be selected, should be reserved for the use of Miss Honoria Rich.

Candida wished to fly for Randolph to support her in refusing Honoria's generosity, but Honoria held her back.

"Why do you make such a fuss about this?" she asked. "It did not cost me half so much as something else."

And then Candida knew.

CHAPTER XII

THE little community of English friends which had started life in Tokyo with such varying degrees of interest and enthusiasm, eight years ago, was rapidly thinning out. The Tiffanys had gone, and Finch had gone, and Rich was about to proceed to England to take up the old *rôle* which Nature had obviously intended him to play, that of Sir Randolph Rich of Richborough, Master of Foxhounds, or something of the kind, and with him would go Lady Rich, who had spent so much of her time in Tokyo that she was really one of us. Bradwardine had gone soon after the declaration of the war with China had left him without an occupation in Japan, though he had since been back as captain of a splendid new British cruiser sent out for the operations of the Allies against China, a post which he owed to the knowledge he had picked up while he was attached to the Japanese Navy, so that those years of yeoman's service had not counted for nothing. And now Jevons had been appointed adviser on Japanese affairs to the Foreign Office in London at fifteen hundred a year, with the precedence of a Permanent Under-Secretary. The Foreign Office had ordered him to take up his new duties at once, without considering the fact that Lord Clapham, who could not speak a word of Japanese, was perfectly helpless without an interpreter. In the interval the Japanese Government, with whom his lordship's relations were exceptionally good, as he had seconded their efforts for Treaty Revision from the first, were delighted to accede to his request that I might be granted leave from the Dai Gakku to act as his interpreter.

I felt that it was rather pleasant going back to the

Legation on this much more recognised footing, and my relations with Chiquita for some time past had been of the pleasantest. At twenty-six she may have lost a little of the *diablerie* which characterized her at eighteen, but she was a nicer woman. She was no longer so inconsiderate or irresponsible, and she had acquired a certain taste for collecting, and a real knowledge of the life of the deserving and amusing Japanese poor. I was, to a certain extent, tickled by her assumption that my duties at the Legation placed me at her beck and call when the office hours were over, but as she was so pretty and so charming, I did not dispute the assumption, but laid myself out to enjoy the companionship.

Fortunately she no longer cared for riding, for I never had had the opportunity of becoming a horseman. Her ideas of amusing herself lay, as ever, in the direction of going to parties at the other Legations, to which she took me as escort because her uncle refused to go, and in making expeditions to curio-shops and festivals, or any other places where she could see the humorous side of native life.

I was amazed at the growth of both her intelligence and amiability since the memorable occasion when I last stayed at the Legation. In the evenings, after dinner, when we were very often alone, she was so unaffectedly nice.

I had been at the Legation about a month, enjoying the greatest kindness from both Lord Clapham and his niece, when the event took place which was to make such a difference to my future life.

One night, after dinner, Lord Clapham said to me: "I've got something to tell you, Page, which I think will please you, though the rules of our Diplomatic Service lay down that the Secretary-Interpreters of Legation shall be drawn from the interpreters trained for the Consular Service, the British Government, acting on my advice, have decided to offer you Jevons' place."

I must say that my heart jumped with pleasure. I had so far, by exercising strong restraint upon myself, managed to avoid disagreeables with the Japanese

students in my class at the Dai Gakku, but the task was not pleasant to one's dignity, though the pay was good, and I enjoyed being in Japan amazingly. The prospect of exchanging that trying kind of post for the ease and dignity of an appointment at the Legation, was fascinating.

I thanked Lord Clapham profusely, and made bold to ask how he had obtained me the appointment.

"By mentioning your special services during the burglarious attack on the British Legation, and the several occasions on which you have come forward and lent your services when the work of the Legation would have been at a standstill!"

"The only difficulty is, sir," I said, "that I am in the employ of the Japanese, and under a contract to give them six months' notice of retirement to enable them to get someone to take my place."

"I have arranged that, through the Minister of Education, if you care to take the place. He will grant you the year's leave which you would have had if the time had come for the holiday in Europe, laid down in your contract, and before the year is up, someone else (probably a Japanese, for they are replacing the foreign professors as their time expires with Japanese) will be appointed in your place."

"That makes it doubly charming, sir," I said, "and I owe it entirely to you."

"I'm sure I'm very glad if I have been able to be of any service to you," he said, in his ultra-polite, self-depreciating manner, and pushed the wonderful old claret towards me. The glasses were most generous for such wine.

As we discussed the bottle, he initiated a fresh surprise.

"Have you ever thought of marrying, Page?" he asked.

"Oh, I suppose so, my lord, but not in any particular way. The choice out here is not very large."

"Why don't you ask my niece?" he enquired, in his naïve, almost foolish, way.

"Chiefly because she would not look at me," was

the reply on the tip of my tongue, but I put it more formally.

"How could I aspire to her hand?"

"I really don't know," he admitted, "but the wish was father to the thought."

I fairly glowed with the kindness of the speech, though I could not but regard it as a chimera.

"I should not like to lose Mercedes,"—this was the name by which his niece had been christened; Lord Clapham used it on State occasions; other people never thought of her except by her nickname of Chiquita—Little One. "I should not like to lose Mercedes," he repeated; "she is like my own child to me. I have had her with me ever since she was a little baby, and she is the image of my adorable Spanish wife who ran away with Captain Sandeman and has been lost to me ever since, except in memory."

There was not a tone of resentment in the voice of this extraordinary man as, for the first time that I had ever heard of it, he alluded to his wife's being still alive, and her infidelity. He merely regretted her loss, and seemed to think it quite natural that a beautiful young woman should have run away from a sober-sides like himself.

"A great deal of the light," he said, "would go out of my life if Mercedes, too, left me. . . I like her very faults, her unreasonableness, her mischievousness—they remind me of her aunt. . . But Mercedes is getting on. She must be five- or six-and-twenty, and in a few years one of her race might, if she were not married, become a cross old woman."

His frankness was really extraordinary, but what he said was convincing. The element of *mauvaise honte* was left out in his composition. It was this which made him so unsatisfactory upon patriotic questions. If he was ever at school, his breaches of the code of honour maintained by boys would have been appalling. He was more observant though than I thought, for he said:

"When I saw the way in which Mercedes received you and talked of your taking up your residence here, I could not help thinking how pleasant it would be if

she were married to a member of my staff, so that she might continue hostess of my house without being an old maid."

His frankness verged on the appalling. If it came to Chiquita's ears she would surely have me poisoned, if she could not secure my dismissal.

I waited for him to dictate the means by which such a desirable event could be brought about, but the initiative was not his strong point, so in my desire to strike further while the iron was hot, and my despair of getting any further if I waited for him, I said:

"What do you wish me to do, sir?"

"Why to get her—I've said so."

"But how do you wish me to set about it, sir?"

"I'm sure I don't know," he replied.

And I was equally sure that he did not. At last I said: "Am I at liberty to try my luck, sir; and may I tell Miss Palafox that I have your approval?"

"If you think it will do any good," he said gloomily.

"Then I think I will join Miss Palafox now, sir."

When I went upstairs, I found the subject of our conversation in the drawing-room at the piano, singing Spanish popular songs to herself; songs of love and wit, and putting as much humour and feeling into them as if she was singing to a full theatre.

I had never seen her look so lovely or so sympathetic, but when I came to know her better, I found that it was music which engaged her sympathies, that human beings had little part in them. She stopped when I came in; she seldom could be induced to play or sing except when she was alone.

"Have you heard my news?" I asked excitedly. "Your uncle has got me Jevons' place, and the Japanese authorities have given their consent to my leaving the Dai Gakku at once, so that I shall be living under your roof for the future."

"I am glad," she said unfeignedly.

"Your uncle made another announcement to me, which concerns you more intimately."

"Dear me, I wonder what that could have been," she said, in total ignorance, unless she was a hypocrite of the first class.

"He told me—don't think me horribly presumptuous—that it was his wish that you should marry me."

I plumped it out in desperation of approaching the matter diplomatically, and then I waited for the *coup-de-grace*. I felt that I had gone too far, and laid myself open for one of the merciless snubs which she had administered to me from time to time.

But she was grown more gracious. She spared me that; she only gave her head a sad little shake, and said:

"I shall never marry now. But don't go away and hide yourself." (I understood the allusion.) "I'm not saying this unkindly, and I want you to be just as big friends as you have been all this delightful month. I thought you knew how foolish my uncle was. You belong to the other side." She referred to the opinion Conservatives entertained of Lord Clapham.

We were able to go on as if nothing had happened. She had been so temperate in her refusal, and had shown so much tact, and she had in a gentle way treated the matter as so impossible to contemplate.

But the mere making of that preposterous request had its effect. Until I proposed to marry her, she could never have thought of me as a suitor. And now she showed me the chivalry which nice women feel compelled to show towards men whom they have unhorsed in the tournament of love.

On me the effect of this *fainéant* proposal was much greater. Lord Clapham had put it into my head that the princess of my fairy-tale might be won by the poor boy, and though the princess had refused in the orthodox manner and made it clear that such a thing was not to be thought of, I was going to be with her and treated as a rejected suitor on parole, and not merely as the Secretary-Interpreter at the Legation.

I really think that Chiquita was glad for me to have proposed; it made me a more interesting personality to have about the house, and the position gave her no anxiety; she was so perfectly capable of taking care of herself. Though the marriage could not be thought of, she continued to treat me as a rejected lover whose wounds had to be healed with the balm

of graciousness. The wounds, in fact, hardly existed; I had so little hope of success that she had knocked me down with the proverbial feather.

One day while I was doing Legation work down in the library, Mrs. Sandys came in to call. She had come over to Tokyo to see some English friends at the Imperial, and finding them out, dropped in to spend the afternoon at the Legation.

When I went up into the drawing-room for tea—Lord Clapham preferred his in solitude with his philosophy—I found Mrs. Sandys alone in the drawing-room, Chiquita having gone to fetch her latest purchases at our curio-shops. Her purchases, I may parenthesise, were mostly of articles which would serve for her dress or her dressing-table.

"Well, Mr. Page, what is this I hear about you?" asked Bryn Sandys, with a sparkle of amusement in her eye.

"How can I tell what you have heard about me, Mrs. Sandys?"

"I mean your misdemeanour, of course, and I should not think that you commit so many of them as to be unable to trace the one to which I refer."

"I suppose you mean the fearful indiscretion in which Lord Clapham involved me?" I said, feeling rather uncomfortable.

"I mean your proposal to Miss Palafox."

I told her my version.

"And you were really willing to entrust your happiness to her, or was it merely step Number Two in the ladder of your diplomatic career?"

"She is the only girl I have ever thought about in Japan." This was true, for beyond acquaintances made at parties, and Candida, who was so very much absorbed in Rich, she was the only woman I had seen anything of except Mrs. Sandys herself. The Sandys' had been delightfully kind to me. I stayed with them repeatedly. They were the most intimate friends I had in the world—and if my affair had not shown itself to be so utterly out of the question that Chiquita could go on as if nothing had happened, I should certainly have gone to Mrs. Sandys for help.

"She behaved like a brat to you when you were going back to Tokyo that very first time you ever stayed with us. I was very nearly asking her to return my photograph when she told me about it. I felt so indignant at her not seeing how abominably she had behaved."

That wound was grateful for balm, even after all these years.

"But I suppose she is not such a brat now, for she must be five- or six-and twenty. Dear me! how we are all getting on! You would not have to wait many years for our Mary—she's eleven."

If Mary Sandys had been half a dozen years older when her step-mother made this remark, what a vision! What ideal parents-in-law Bryn and Philip Sandys would have made.

"If Lord Clapham has set his heart upon it," said Mrs. Sandys, "and you are willing to take the responsibility, it would be rather nice if it could be managed. He does not have much of a time, and he is such a decent old thing, though he is a Little Englander. And we must not forget how well he has done for England by yielding with good grace to the pretensions of my fellow-countrymen just before their power began to advance with such leaps and bounds, that they could have been very unpleasant if their demands had been resisted."

Just then Chiquita returned, followed by Japanese servants carrying huge trays of recent purchases, and dragged me into the explanation of the value of each piece, from the curio-collector's point of view, with great pride, as if she had been guided by artistic or historical considerations in their purchase, and not simply for their value in her colour schemes or because she thought they were "'cute," an expression she had picked up from the American globe-trotters she met at Yokohama. I saw Mrs. Sandys eyeing her while she was catechising me.

The catechism did not last long, for a servant came in to announce Sir Randolph and Lady Rich. They had come to say good-bye. Rich's successor, for whom Lord Clapham had wired as soon as the engage-

ment took place, had arrived. Rich had not been in the Legation since his marriage, but Foreign Office rules did not permit his departure from the country till his successor had arrived in it.

Candida still looked a little delicate, though she had been recovering very fast. She had a most exquisite dress on, so rich and dainty that I could not help looking at it and wondering how Ching Lee could have achieved such a triumph. She read my thoughts and made an attempt at a Court curtsy.

"It isn't Ching Lee," she said, "it's Bryn Sandys who has been excelling herself and, because I had no chance of getting a proper trousseau out here, had her whole summer shipment of new clothes altered to fit me, and gave them to me as a wedding present, heroically determining to go through the summer on last year's frocks and Ching Lee."

How happy Candida looked, and we were all glad to see how devoted Rich had become.

I was specially glad, for I had an indefinite presentiment about that marriage. Honoria had gone in spite of Candida's solicitations that she should wait and go with them, which was certainly wise. If it had done no harm, it could not have improved matters, for her and Rich to be thrown together every hour of the day in the restricted space of an ocean liner.

They did not stay long, for they would see Mrs. Sandys again; their ship was not leaving Yokohama for a day or two.

I went down to the compound to see them off. We were right. Randolph was devoted, you could see how delighted he was with his wife as he helped her into her *riksha* and arranged an extra cushion behind her, which he had carried in a strap from Yokohama. I knew that, because he kicked the strap out of his own *riksha* as he was vaulting into it, and would have left it behind but for the watchful eyes of the Japanese, who miss nothing.

What a wonderful woman Candida was. As she stepped up into her *riksha* she looked as neat and pretty

a bride as any man could want. And that was the last I ever saw of her, for business came in suddenly at the Legation and kept me from seeing the steamer off as I had intended.

Lord Clapham was in the compound to see them off. He pleaded his sedentary habits as an excuse for saying good-bye to them here, instead of at the ship.

The parting between the two men was gratifyingly hearty, almost affectionate, for the elder man had known Randolph since he was a child, and had had him under him for years, and was glad to see him becoming more serious. And Randolph had acquired a great respect for his Chief, not only because he saw him justified by events in the history of Japan, but because the man whom he had freely characterized in his early days as "an old rotter" had shown that, although he was not a fighting John Bull like Sir Harry Parkes, when an Englishman was injured or hustled, he had at any rate the courage of his opinions in resisting the importunities of the strong English community at Yokohama when they had tried to force him into courses which would have been grossly impolitic in the light of succeeding events.

"God bless you, Randolph," he said, as their hands parted from the long grasp. In spite of his devotion to philosophy he was one of the most regular attendants at the Anglican Cathedral; so it was not a mere phrase with him; and I considered the kiss on the middle of Lady Rich's forehead a masterpiece of fatherliness.

He carried me back into the library with him; he had a Japanese book on German philosophy which he wished me to tell him something about. It was rather dry work compared with having tea with those two charming women upstairs, but I did not lose in the quantity of tea I received, and I was only too delighted to do anything to please him after his manifestation of feeling for me. Mrs. Sandys had gone before I had settled the pretensions of that Japanese plagiarist; but Chiquita was still in the room, walking

about re-arranging her purchases on the trays. This was a strange thing for her to be doing, for she was lazy, even for a Spaniard; and the Japanese excel in the art of clearing up. When she saw me, she came across the room to meet me.

"I'm going to do what Uncle wants," she said.

The inference was irresistible.

CHAPTER XIII

LORD CLAPHAM'S long tenure of the British Legation had come to an end, and he had been promoted to a certain Latin country, whose susceptibilities are extreme and whose importance is nil, for which the possession of a Spanish niece was a qualification.

A post was found there for me, too; after learning a language like Japanese without any such advantages it was not difficult to me to learn Spanish from my witch of a wife in the course of a year. We were given six months in England on our way to the new appointment, and were now, in the first days of 1904, visiting Sir Randolph and Lady Rich at Richborough, their place in Northamptonshire.

Marriage had turned out to me better than Mrs. Tiffany would have prophesied. For one thing, poor young Rose's being sent to Japan for his convalescence, affected my wife a good deal. She made me take her to see him, and was shocked at his appearance, though the doctor assured her that he was doing very well, and would make a good recovery. He had been frightfully disfigured by his fall, but had received no organic injuries, and the bullet at that short range had gone right through him, which is the good or bad feature of the modern small calibre rifle.

He was very glad to see her. I thought the questions she asked him about how he looked when he was wounded were most gruesome, and could not see that it mattered what sort of bed he was lying on, till she explained to me in the extraordinary confession which she made to me that night.

"Sam," said Chiquita (my godfathers and godmothers had testified that Samuel Henry were the names under which my parents wished me to be

baptised)—“ Sam,” said Chiquita, kitting as she always did when she had been naughty or wanted anything, “ I have something appalling to tell you. Be very nice to your wife for a few minutes, because you may never like her again.”

The confession, when it did come, was certainly of a character to make a guinea-pig's eyes drop out of its head if it were held up by the tail. It concerned the unfortunate Kenneth Rose, and though he might have been killed in action in the ordinary way, that being as he said what sailors sign on for, yet if he had been killed, his family would have been justified in laying the blame for it at my naughty little wife's door.

She was in a very truthful mood, and told me the whole ins and outs of that marvellous day which Kenneth Rose spent with her at the British Legation at Tokyo.

It seems to have been plain enough sailing till just before midnight, when she had that awful dream and woke, and Rose's account of his appearance after the accident tallied exactly with the vision in her dream.

Well, she had fallen in love with the boy, and assures me, though I have every reason to be satisfied with things as they are, that she never could love me as much as she loved him when she saw his rosy face lying fast asleep on the white pillow looking as innocent as a child, though he had read himself to sleep with a naughty French novel.

When she had that dream, she knew that an awful catastrophe was going to befall him if he went on the journey he intended, so she cast about for a means to prevent it.

It never occurred to her that no catastrophe which could possibly befall an officer in the British Navy could equal his failure to rejoin his ship when she was ordered on war service. It seemed to her mere woman's mind that if she could by any means keep him back until his ship had sailed that this object would be achieved. That any further consequences could befall him simply never occurred to her.

She had hardly any time to lay her plans, so the

success which she achieved on her own lines did credit to her resourcefulness and presence of mind, if not to her sense of rectitude. Quick as thought, she had instructed her maid to knock up the two *riksha* boys who lived opposite the Legation, for the large amount of chance custom which it afforded. The maid was also to provide herself with a cloak to throw over Chiquita's head, and to instruct the *riksha* boys the moment they heard Chiquita call out to dash off at their best pace into the country in any direction but that of Yokohama. They were told that they would be pursued and must exercise all their ingenuity to baffle their pursuers. Two boys were to be ordered, but only one *riksha*.

Events played into Chiquita's hands. They had heard the commotion. Thinking that there might be some luggage to take to Yokohama, both boys were out in a double *riksha* waiting to be hired. The Japanese have quite the Southern love for plot or intrigue, and carried out their instructions with great spirit. ("They thought it was an *amour*," interjected Chiquita mischievously.) And they kept up the game till daylight, when she got out, leaving her maid in the *riksha*, and, paying them extravagantly, told them to follow her home, always keeping out of sight unless she clapped her hands for their attendance.

When she had finished her confession, I was prepared to hear her ask in her play-penitent voice: "Now what do you think of me, Sam?" but she cut the ground from under my feet by not asking for my forgiveness, but for my advice; and with this she grew sweetly serious, holding on to my arm and looking up to me with childish eyes. The doubt whether she should tell Kenneth had made her very uneasy.

I thought it would be positively cruel to tell him that his sacrifices had all been made for a deliberate deceit on the part of a girl who had been frightened by a dream, and suggested that now she had confessed to her husband the secret would trouble her no longer.

"You are quite sure that I ought not to tell him, aren't you, dear?"

"Quite sure, and if you feel that you have treated

him shabbily, you will do much better by going and sitting with him to cheer him up than by making a fate-disturbing confession. Flirting wouldn't be half as bad as that," I added, with a parting shot.

Chiquita took my advice, even as I suspect, to the extent of flirting with him. He was so ill, poor boy, all by her fault, that he was welcome to any pretty playfulness from her which would beguile him in the tedious progress to recovery.

I trusted Chiquita then, and I have since found out how implicitly she is to be trusted in these matters. Her flirtations are not flirtations in the ordinary sense of the word; she merely amuses herself, and the other person does not count at all. At my suggestion Rose went home to England on a sick leave in the same ship that carried Lord Clapham and his fortunes, including ourselves. He was not in a fit state to be left out in Japan without people who were strongly interested in him. By the end of the voyage he was my friend, not Chiquita's.

CHAPTER XIV

"Dick, old boy," said Candida, frail in health but with a new kind of prettiness from her months of happy wifehood, "I wish you'd run down to Richborough and get some hunting or shooting. You'll be ill too, if you take no exercise but walking about the streets for an hour."

"I shouldn't enjoy it; I should always be expecting a telegram. Whenever I go away for long, I find you worse when I come back. You mope so when you're left alone."

"But you mustn't mind that. It's the climate makes me mope, and London. It's not that I want to keep my husband tied to my apron-strings. It's just that nobody's so good at making me forget London."

"You're not regretting that we came to London till it's over, are you? I want to give the heir the best chance."

"No, I assure you; I shouldn't like to trust myself to Doctor Appleyard. He's a pleasant old gentleman to talk to, and you say that he's a first-rate man if there's an accident in the hunting-field. He's naturally sober then. But think how terrified I should have been if I had to send for him after dinner!"

"It's a pity. The views from our windows on a fine winter morning are lovely—the distances are so splendid."

"You were quite right in bringing me up. The country is a dull place when you must not ride, and I've been enjoying London awfully, till I had to give

up going about. The matter with London is the view from the windows. Look at our street! We can't see either end of it, and the houses opposite are all alike, blank walls with holes in them for the doors and windows."

"We came here because it was such a good house and so near your doctor," said Randolph diplomatically. All the great doctors live in this quarter."

"I know, dear. I quite approved of the choice, and we've got one thing to be thankful for, at any rate," she said, with a laugh, which had lost none of its mirth though it was feebler; "we can't see the Square round the corner. The black skeletons of the London elms give me the creeps after our own evergreen cryptomerias."

"It was awfully unkind of me to bring you to a climate like this."

"No, no, no! Fancy not wanting to see England, especially when you are mistress of such a fairy palace as Richborough."

"But you miss Japan so!"

"I didn't till I was ill. And this is an illness which could have been avoided if we had not been so anxious for an heir. What I do miss," she continued, "is that crystal atmosphere and the picturesqueness. London looks so drab and dull. It has no outsides."

He made her take a big armchair in front of the fire, which was, as usual in England, arranged in a blank wall.

"You can't see the ugly street from here. Try and see Japan in the fire!" He arranged the cushions behind her, and a fat cushion in front of her to toast her pretty ankles, which always put heart into her in winter.

"You're as good as a nurse at making one comfy. Pull my slippers off, will you, dear. I want to warm the soles of my feet."

"What lovely feet you have, Candida," he said, as she held them up to have the exquisitely-fitting slippers drawn off. But won't you get cold wearing

such thin things?" The kid was hardly thicker than tissue paper.

"I hate warm slippers—they're so ugly. Thank you, I'd rather have my feet neat for my husband and warm them when they get too cold."

"I feel more at peace with England now," she said, as she sat bending her slender soles to temper the heat of the fire. "I never knew what a decent fire was till I came home."

Randolph liked that word "home." To the English of Antipodea, no matter if they and their fathers before them have been born out there, England is always referred to as "home."

"But," he asked, in mock reproach, "is that all you like England for?"

"No, of course not. I've had the happiest time of my life in England. I did not know that I should ever feel such ecstasy as I felt riding down the green drives in our park with you in the early morning. I was enchanted with the smallness of the leaves, the freshness of the green, the way they almost filled up the sky over our heads and the way the rabbits and pheasants used to cross in front of us between the walls of underwood which came right to the edge of the grass—such royal pheasants they were—and the drives went on for miles, and all our own, thanks to dear, generous Honoria. It was good of you to go straight down to Richborough instead of wanting to spend the season in London."

"There was nothing very noble about it. I wanted to go to Richborough."

"All alone, like we went?"

"Yes, all alone. You have helped me to ferret out so many things in Japan that I wanted to explore our English possessions together."

He was not playing the hypocrite to please her; indeed he could not have played it well enough to deceive anyone, least of all Candida's loving eyes. He had grown so accustomed, as he said, to looking at things with Candida, that it would have taken away the

cream of his pleasure not to have had her with him when he was going over all the things which he remembered as a boy.

His father, Sir Cornwallis's next brother, had been Vicar of Richborough, and the church and vicarage were in the Park near the Manor House, so he had always had the run of the place in his father's life-time, and when his father died, and a stranger was appointed to the living because there was no Rich in orders to take it, he had spent his holidays at the Manor House till he left school and went in the Guards; so there were many memories for him. Candida could not help laughing affectionately at their unromantic nature. Most of them were connected with the slaying of some animal, or a fight with some boy from the brickfields on the edge of the estate, which were responsible for so much of the wealth of the Riches.

Honoria spent the season in London, and they had been three full months in possession of their estates and themselves before Candida had a note from her that she proposed to come down to the suite she had reserved for herself; but that if it was inconvenient to them, she had visits which she could pay.

"Shall we let her pay visits?" asked Randolph, a little doubtful of himself.

"Visits!" repeated Candida, scornfully. "We'll have exactly the same bell-rings and bonfires and triumphal arches and village maidens in white starched dresses as we had when we made our entry into Richborough. She's not been home since she came back from Japan."

This was the outpouring of Candida's heart, but it was very popular with the neighbours and tenantry, who naturally were a little disappointed at the cousins not marrying and keeping the family property together, though Candida's personal qualities had told in her favour; now especially when they could see the relations that existed between her and Honoria.

They were hardly ever apart. Randolph was seen alone much more, and began to spend his time in

taking up his position in the county. He had been gazetted a J.P. as a matter of course.

He was guarding himself, for he recognised, the moment that he saw Honoria again, that she awoke feelings in him which Candida did not. He loved Candida dearly; there was no one whose companionship he enjoyed so much; she gratified his senses and sensibilities at more points than any other woman could; she was everything that was good and gracious to the eye as well as the mind, but he was in love with Honoria, and the worst of it was that Honoria was in love with him.

Honoria stayed in his house, and they avoided each other except in Candida's presence, and lavished their feelings on her.

Honoria and Candida, both being frank people and not afraid of facing a situation, thrashed the matter out a few days after the arrival of the former.

"I ought not to stay here, Candida. I find I am still in love with Randolph. I thought I should have got over it, but I haven't; and I know that he is still fond of me by the way he avoids me. I shall pack up my traps and go."

"I never heard such nonsense!" said Candida warmly. "If you are in love with each other, and I cannot deceive myself on the subject, that's no reason why you should go away. You are a lady, Honoria, and I would trust you against the evidence of my own eyes." And after a very slight pause she added: "And Dick's a gentleman, though you don't expect so much of them. But he's too good to me for me to fear any serious aberrations on his part."

They were silent for a few minutes. Honoria wished to say something and did not know how to say it, and Candida was formulating opinions which she had always held in her clear, generous mind.

"For two people to avoid each other," she began, "because they like each other better than anyone else in the world, seems to me the height of folly. We were sent into the world to make the best of our lives.

To arrogate the functions of the Fates and to deliberately cut the thread of happiness, seems to me immoral. If people are strong enough to wrench themselves hundreds of miles apart, and stay there, they ought to be strong enough to keep from excesses when they are together. There has been a vast deal of unhappiness in this old world because people have confused two issues. You confess that you are in love with my husband, and we may take it that he is in love with you. For you to enjoy the pleasure of the ordinary intercourse that is maintained between friends is, in my opinion, absolutely unobjectionable. The other issue is of course horrible and wicked, and if you felt that flight was the only way to prevent that, flight is the only remedy. But in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand I believe this to be pure cowardice, and I am quite willing to test my opinion in my own case."

Honorina accepted the situation. Her pride made her feel sure of her behaviour, and a sane, clear-headed woman like her could not but see force in Candida's reasoning. She knew Candida was a woman of transparent sincerity. The only thing which made her hesitate was that Candida had almost died of love, and made no secret of it.

What a difficult situation it was. She could hardly put this into words in maintaining her objection, and it also seemed so vain of her to expect that Randolph should be led astray by a girl like her after he had known the exquisite intimacy of married life with a woman like Candida.

She expected Candida to divine her thoughts, but Candida's mind was moving in a different direction.

"It would make Dick very unhappy to think he was never to see you again, and it would hurt me so much to think that regret was gnawing his heart when he has made me so exquisitely happy."

"I think I ought to go," said Honorina.

"No, no, stay and be strong!" pleaded Candida.

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The steam of the sacrifice which Candida laid on the altar was grateful in the nostrils of the gods. Not a particle of harm had come of it when they went up to London in the late autumn, leaving Honoria to entertain her friends with the shooting, for which Randolph, in the delicate state of his wife, had no inclination, if he could have found the leisure.

Once indeed Candida had come upon them looking out of a window in an attitude which seemed suspicious. That night she asked him:

"Were you kissing Honoria, Randolph?"

"No," he said simply; "I never do."

"You are cousins, anyhow," said Candida. "I do not want to scold you; what I did want to say was don't kiss her when she is alone unless you kiss her before me as well. I should not mind your kissing her, though there is a reason why it is better that you should not. But I should have hated to think that you kissed her and hid it from me."

The suspicion was needless. Honoria would not have permitted it, even if she could have trusted herself. But to her kissing was the Rubicon between the two kinds of love.

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The days dragged on in London. If Candida got no better, it was not to be expected under the circumstances—and at any rate she got no worse.

As time drew near she wrote for Honoria, begging her not to refuse, and Honoria came at once with a perceptibly good effect on Candida's spirits. Indeed that night, Friday, at dinner, she seemed quite her old self. But two hours before midnight she was seized with such violent pains that they telephoned for the Doctor, who examined her and at once began to make preparations for her delivery. "I'm sorry it's a Friday," she said, "though I don't much believe in luck."

"Now, Sir Randolph," said the great man cheerily, "you'll have to leave us. I suppose you would feel more confidence if your cousin stayed with you, Lady Rich?"

The operation took so long that Randolph began to get anxious, though he had no idea how long such things ought to take. He was walking up and down the next room, muttering, "Poor old Candida!" when Honoria came in to him suddenly.

"Yes, it is poor old Candida, Ran! She's dying!" she sobbed, and flew back, followed by Randolph with fear written on his face for the first time.

Candida, who had just received a strong restorative, was not insensible, though she was very weak with the fatal hæmorrhage. She recognised her husband at once, and a smile of delight spread over her face, not an angelic smile, but a very human one. She lifted her faint arms to her husband, repeating in a low but distinct voice the words, "Good-bye, Dick; you've given me everything I desired in the world. Friday was not an unlucky day. . . Our child. . ."

With these words Candida's brave spirit fled.

"It is a little girl," the doctor said. "She did not know."

It was a long time before he could leave the room, and in the interval Candida's heart-broken maid managed to get out the message that her mistress had left a letter for her husband in her dressing-case. When Randolph lifted up the last tray, there were two envelopes. The large one contained a will, which he had no remembrance of her executing. Indeed, he had for the moment forgotten that her income must represent a capital of fifteen or twenty thousand pounds. This, as it proved, was left to him absolutely. But he put it aside for perusal later, because the other envelope contained something in her own dear handwriting, so characteristic of that frank, sincere life.

The others crept out of the room, one by one, leaving him with the yet warm body of his wife, and her last

message in his hand, so full of humility and nobility, though she died a cheerful pagan without a thought for her future in heaven. It was dated a few days back, and contained these words:—

My dearest Husband,

If these words are ever given you to read, they will be the last of our long companionship, for I only write them in case of the sudden death which may always befall a woman in my condition, especially at the birth of her first child. You will perhaps be astonished at what I have to say, but you will end by recognising its justice, as I do. I have left you all I possess, after deducting a sum sufficient for the conveyance of my body to Japan, and its burial in the Happy Valley at Yokohama. When this is done, I pray you to forget me, and with that intention I ask, though I do not demand, that you should send out to my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sandys, the portrait you had painted of me by Collier. I should like them to remember me, for I have done them no wrong. Against you I have sinned grievously. I made you marry me when you loved another woman far better than me, and she loved you in return. She could not love you better than me, for I sacrificed my honour to my love. But she was more worthy of your love. For she had your heart, and you had hers, and she sacrificed them both to her pity for me. If I die I shall die willingly. For I have had the happiness I desired, and I make way for her whom I robbed of her birthright. I do not anticipate death, though why I am writing this, if I do not, passes my understanding. Neither do I fear it, though I have no conviction as to what comes after. I should like to die in giving birth to my child, and if it survives me I pray that it may be a daughter, so that your heir may spring as in justice he should, from the body of Honoria.

Have no vain imaginings that you are honouring my memory by delaying your marriage with her. You

would have been married and the child hers if I had not come between you with my selfish yearnings.

I desire to offer the only reparation in my power, by having my body buried out of your sight, and enjoining you to forget, as far as you can, that I have ever existed. I pray you both, in your generosity, to forgive me who have nothing to forgive.

Good-bye, dear Husband, faithful and true,
I am your loving wife,

CANDIDA RICH.

Randolph stayed all night by the body of the wife who believed in him so implicitly, and whose last thoughts had been so generous, looking at the beautiful, calm, courageous face before decay set in. The smile on her features told that she had gone to her death in calm confidence now that she had made requital for her one lapse in "playing the game."

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A week later he was on his way to Yokohama with her body. In his affectionate good-bye to Honoria he said not a word of the future, beyond showing her Candida's last letter, and her will. But he left Richborough and all his affairs in her hands, and a commission for the artist to paint a replica of Candida's portrait, to be forwarded as soon as it was completed, to the Sandys' in Japan.

Candida, who had gone back to Yokohama to lie with her own people, had the largest funeral ever known in Yokohama; and Randolph, after staying a short time at the Sandys' to see her tomb erected, returned home. The tomb might excite the wonder of future antiquaries.

While he and Honoria were discussing the form it should take, an advertisement arrived from Christie's saying that a few days later there would be a sale of the collection made by a famous traveller three

generations back, which had lain forgotten in an old country house. The gem of the collection, of which a picture was given on the outside of the catalogue, was an ancient Greek tomb in the Athenian style of the fourth century B.C., which was a lost bit of Miletus. It was like a temple-end with a sunken panel, decorated with a most exquisite bas-relief. The subject of the picture was a young, beautiful and smiling woman saying good-bye to her husband, a youthful Greek warrior. You could see that it was the wife who had died, because she stood on the bank of the Styx with Charon and his boat behind her.

What struck Randolph and Honoria about the picture was the likeness of the dead girl to Candida.

"We must have that, Ran, whatever it costs, for Candida's grave," said Honoria.

The sum ran into four figures, but if it had absorbed the whole of Candida's legacy Randolph would have bought it.

The significance of this bit of ancient Hellas standing in Japan, the Hellas of to-day, did not strike good, plain Randolph while he was having it erected on the green hillside in the Happy Valley. But to Philip and Bryn Sandys it was a parable; and at their entreaty the funeral was delayed till this fair white shaft of Pentelic marble stood facing the sunset and Greece and England.

Randolph was doubly glad that he had followed Candida's body to its grave instead of obeying the instructions laid down so precisely in the will that he should send the body to Japan and leave the carrying out of the funeral arrangements to the Sandys, for it took him to Japan at one of the most inspiring moments in the history of the world, when the Japanese, after exhausting the resources of chivalry and forbearance, had boldly flung down the gauntlet to the greatest military Power on earth, and dealt a staggering blow to its enemy's navy.

It is impossible to describe Japan as he found it—a nation in arms—a nation in prayer to the old gods who had carried it through so many earlier perils from the

Asian mainland, a nation anxious to shed its blood to secure the crown of martyrdom. How glad Randolph was that his eyes had been opened to the greatness of the Japanese, years before, that he had made his *amende honorable* before it was in the nature half of an insult, half of a surrender!

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As he flew home across the Pacific, across the Atlantic, one thing was uppermost in his mind—where would Honoria, virginally, await him; at Vancouver and New York there were telegrams of welcome, but they said nothing on the point which agitated him. It was not till he got to Liverpool that he read the welcome words, "Come straight to Richborough." He had hoped that Honoria would have been at the station, but there was only a groom, one he had never seen, with a waggonette and a spanking pair of horses he had bought just before he went up to London. The porter put his luggage in behind. He drew on his gloves, stepped upon the box, and took the reins. If the groom had only been an old servant it would have been natural to have asked the question, "Where was Miss Rich?" It was not decided till a turn in his avenue brought him in sight of the lovely Tudor porch of the old home of the Riches. There, at the head of the stately flight of steps, in her habit, stood Honoria with one trim foot on the threshold. The significance was not lost on him, though he half wished that the meeting, so long delayed, had been in some more private place.

But her eyes told him all that any man could want, and she looked so typically English with her glorious fairness and in her homespun habit.

"I've taken Fen Abbey," she said. "I just rode over to see that everything was ready for you. Your servants gave me lunch, and you are going to dine with me. Will you drive over when you're ready?"

"Not I! I'm going to ride back with you. My man can bring my dress things later, if you'll give me a room to swop in."

The cousins, Randolph with the sunburn of Eastern Seas still on him, and Honoria with the love-light still in her eyes, walked their horses through the sunset along the white high road which lies between two blue dykes and "long fields of barley and of rye," all the way from Richborough village to Croyland town and Fen Abbey beyond it, and sat about the ancient lawn of the abbots till it was time to dress for dinner. Not for any party that she had ever been asked to had Honoria been more particular to look her very best. Dinner passed, nor swift nor slow, with talk about the marvellous Japan, from which Randolph had just returned.

"When you've finished smoking," she said as she left him, "you can join me in the summer drawing-room."

The summer drawing-room was a noble room. Its great dimensions were due to the fact that it had been the chapel of the Abbey; but it was rather barely furnished, and Honoria had made it look inhabited with her own household goods from Richborough, so that everything had the stamp of her personality upon it.

Its drawback was that it could only be entered by a beautiful fourteenth century processional staircase, supported on three arches, which led up from the courtyard, to what the Italians call the *piano nobile*. Its dais was lighted by the great south transept window of exquisite tracery of the same period, which contained in its deep recess a wide stone seat now cushioned into a luxurious couch, commanding views of the broad fens, rich corn-lands ribboned with dividing streams, and broken here by an ancient steeple rising from the marsh, there by a farm, a windmill, or a thin line of poplars.

On this night of nights the enchanter's wand of a full moon had transformed the whole landscape into a

garden with blossoms too close to distinguish, and silver paths, and had flooded the old Gothic chapel with a pure white light which reflected the delicate window-traceries on the floor, jewelled here and there with rubies and sapphires and emeralds where fragments of the old glass remained.

Randolph Rich was not a man of taste, but he felt that he should never forget the exquisite beauty of that scene.

But it was not so exquisite in his eyes as the beauty of Honoria, all in white, who crossed a shaft of moonlight as she advanced to meet him, looking her womanliest and her queenliest.

It was the first embrace between the cousins since they were children, except the kiss of good-bye Honoria had given him when she sent him to lay his heart before another woman, and the long good-bye kiss when he was going away the width of the world to bury that other woman.

Now she lay in his arms on the window couch for an hour before either of them raised their eyes to the fairyland on the other side of the glass.

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Months after they had been married, they were standing in front of Candida's portrait over their dining-room mantelpiece, as they often did, talking about her. It was a speaking likeness. Candida, in all her grace, smiled her old frank smile and returned their glances with her sincere blue eyes out of the picture.

"Do you remember the evening you came back, Ran?"

"Can I ever forget the loveliest evening in my life?"

"I knew you were cross because I met you on the threshold. But I wanted to greet you there in memory of my father, and I did not want you to kiss me in

the house, where you had lived with Candida, until we were married."

And then Randolph remembered what Candida had said to him about deceiving her.

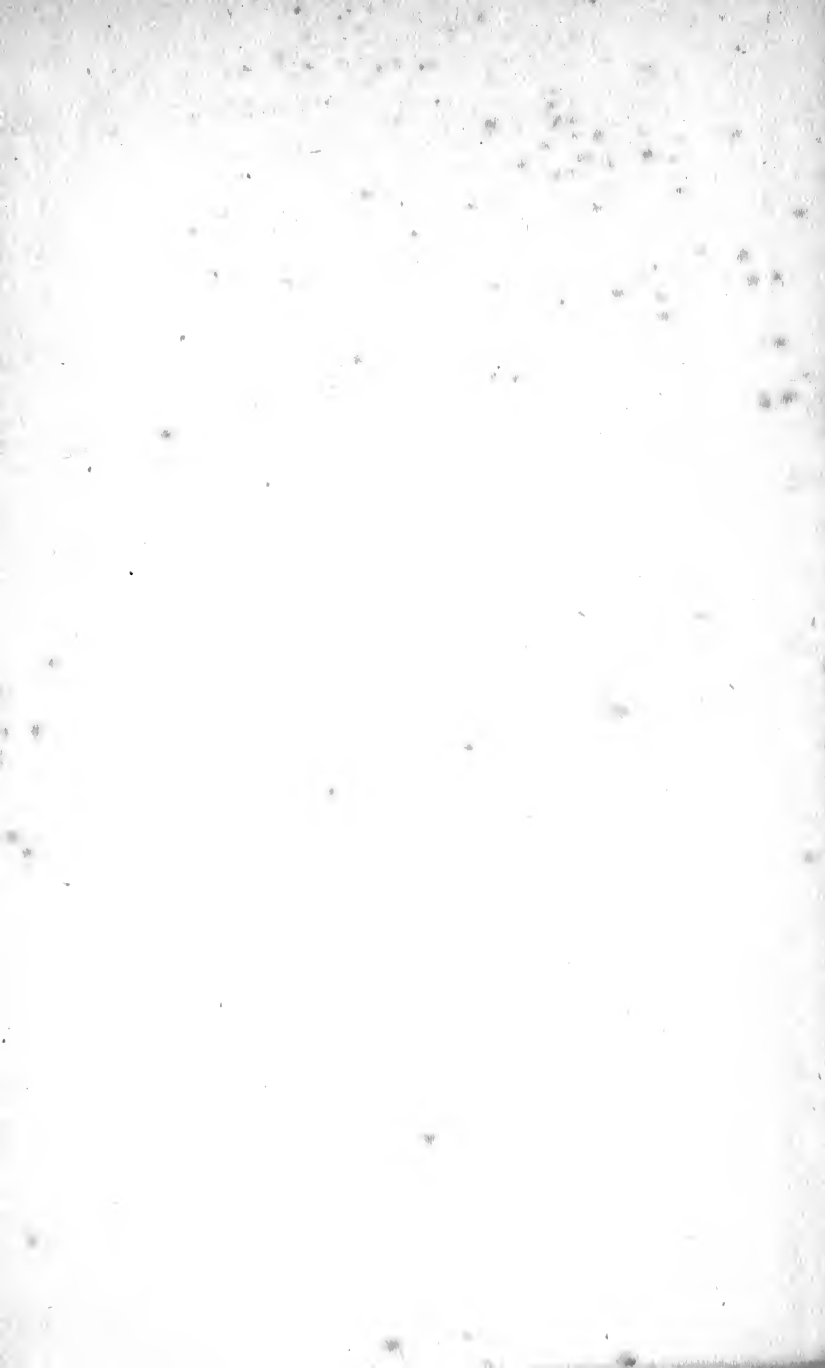
"But Honoria could not have known," he told himself—it was just a woman's instinct.

*In the Soderini Palace at Florence,
May 26th, 1904.*

THE END



97



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